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**DUTCH LANDSCAPE ETCHERS  
OF THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

## **BOOKS**

BY

**WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY**

### **VERSE**

SINGING CARR AND OTHER SONG-BALLADS

OF THE CUMBERLANDS

OLD CHRISTMAS AND OTHER KENTUCKY

TALES IN VERSE

GARLANDS AND WAYFARINGS

### **PROSE**

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (ENGLISH MEN OF

LETTERS SERIES)

FRENCH ETCHERS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

THE ETCHING OF FIGURES

DUTCH LANDSCAPE ETCHERS OF THE

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

### **EDITED**

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**BY  
WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY**



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TO M. P. A.



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## INTRODUCTION

**M**Y aim in the present volume is to trace the development of Dutch landscape etching in the seventeenth century, at a period when the art first attained full and characteristic expression. No other book, in English, covers quite the same ground; for Mr. Binyon, in his excellent monograph,<sup>1</sup> devotes relatively little space to the consideration of landscape, in which the Dutch, despite the earlier etchings of Dürer, Altdorfer, Hirschvogel and Lautensack, in Germany, were real pioneers, and displayed their abilities to greatest advantage.

One important omission will be noted — that of Rembrandt, the greatest of all landscape etchers; but Mr. Binyon, having already contributed an appreciation of Rembrandt's landscape etchings to *The Print-Collector's Quarterly* (for which these articles of mine were written), it seemed unnecessary to include him in the series. After all, it is not Rembrandt, but certain other artists of whom I have written in the following pages, and particularly the Van de Veldes, concerning whom there has been a dearth of information and appreciation in English, and it is they, in any case, who would give to the volume whatever interest and value it may be found to possess.

As the footnotes will indicate, I am indebted to many

<sup>1</sup> *Dutch Etchers of the 17th Century*. By Laurence Binyon. *The Portfolio*, No. 21, September, 1895. London.

previous writers, principally French, on individual artists. I am, likewise, greatly indebted to the officers of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for the courtesy which enabled me to work there continuously for many months, and to avail myself freely of its rich resources, both in prints and in books. To my friend, Mr. FitzRoy Carrington, Curator of the Print Department, and Editor of the *The Print-Collector's Quarterly*, I am, as always, under deep obligation both for general suggestion and for detailed criticism. He has ever been, to his contributors, collaborator rather than editor, and now that the *Quarterly* — the one publication in the world devoted exclusively to the study of prints — has been suspended "for the period of the war," I cannot forbear to point out how much all who are interested in etchings and engravings owe to his active and disinterested efforts on behalf of these arts.

W. A. B.

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
5th May, 1918.

## THE VAN DE VELDES

THE cruelties practised by the Spaniards upon the inhabitants of Flanders in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and especially upon members of the various Protestant sects, had the effect of driving thousands to seek refuge in the cities to the north, then engaged in waging their desperate war for freedom from foreign oppression. Holland's gain from this great movement of immigration is incalculable. In return for the shelter she afforded the refugees, she gained thousands of excellent, frugal, thrifty, hard-working citizens, who were to contribute most effectively throughout the following century to the development of the wealth of their adopted country. And not material wealth alone. These Flemings, heirs of an ancient civilization, brought with them a cultural strain of the highest value and importance. Numberless artists destined to take high — in some cases the very highest — rank in the annals of Dutch art, sprang directly from this superior stock, and not the least among these must be regarded the van de Veldes — that remarkable family which, in two generations, numbered no fewer than five members whose achievements cannot be overlooked in even the most

summary survey of the history of Dutch painting and etching.

The van de Veldes were natives of Antwerp, from which city they had fled, with so many of their fellow-citizens after the memorable siege and sack of 1576 — “The Spanish Fury,” as it is called in history. The head of the family, a simple nail-maker, settled at Rotterdam with his son, Jan the Elder, who found employment there as a schoolmaster and as a calligrapher. Through his skill in the latter capacity, he soon made a place for himself in the community; for the elegancies of handwriting were highly esteemed at that time in Holland, where, as in China and Japan, calligraphy was regarded as an art and served in some sort as an apprenticeship to painting. Expositions and contests were often organized among its most distinguished representatives; and at one of these, instituted in Rotterdam, in 1590, patents conferring the degree of *maîtres de la plume couronnés*, were awarded the winners. M. Emile Michel, author of the excellent monograph<sup>1</sup> on the van de Veldes, suggests that possibly Jan van de Velde may thus have distinguished himself on this occasion, for his proficiency was remarkable, calligraphy in his case sometimes reaching the dignity of design, since, in his capital letters, this “virtuoso of the pen” often incorporated various ornaments, such as people, animals, a swan with wings outspread, or a ship with swelling sails. In any event, his reputation was sufficient to justify his publishing, in 1604, a collection of handwriting models under the Latin title: “*Deliciæ variarum insigniumque Scripturarum, autore Veldio, Scriptore celeberrimo.*” This edi-

<sup>1</sup> *Les Van de Velde.* Émile Michel. Illustrated. Paris; L. Allison et Cie. 1892. (Les Artistes Célèbres.)

tion, which appeared simultaneously in Haarlem and Amsterdam, must have been very successful, since in 1605 it was followed by another edition, published in Haarlem, in Dutch. In it appears the author's portrait engraved by Jacob Matham who, as we shall see later, was to be the master of Jan's second son, Jan II, himself an engraver and etcher. The following year, 1606, still another edition appeared, — this time in Rotterdam, — with German text and under the name of "Hans von dem Felde."

Jan must have made money as well as fame in the pursuit of his dual profession. In 1605 he bought a house in Rotterdam. This, however, he sold again in 1620 and went to live in Haarlem, where he also opened a school, largely patronized, no doubt, by the sons and daughters of his former fellow-citizens of Antwerp, who were found there in even greater numbers than in Rotterdam. It was in Haarlem that he died three years later, — in 1623, — his funeral expenses amounting to eighteen florins — a considerable sum for that period; and it was, too, in that city, then so filled with artists, that, in the words of his biographer, "the sons of the calligrapher felt the call to a vocation higher than their father's."

Although complete evidence is lacking, it appears highly probable that, according to the information furnished by Houbraken, Esaias, Jan II, and Willem I were the sons of Jan I, and not only were all three destined to be artists, but one — Willem I — was to give the Dutch school, in his sons, Willem II and Adriaen, two of its most distinguished masters.

## I

Esaias, Jan van de Velde's eldest son, was born in Amsterdam about 1590, which would make it appear that the calligrapher must have resided for some time in that city, where he had a brother, Anthonie van de Velde, a painter. However this may be, by 1610 Esaias was already established in Haarlem, where he had become a member of the Reformed Church and where, a year later, in 1611, he married a young woman, Cate-lina Maertens, whose family, refugees like his own, hailed from Ghent.

It is probable also that Esaias van de Velde served his artistic apprenticeship in Haarlem, where opportunities for instruction were at that time not lacking. It was at Haarlem, for example, that, in conjunction with van Mander, two artists, younger than he, but already famous, — Goltzius and Cornelissen, — had opened a studio in which they made their pupils draw from the best models and copy rare casts of antique statues.

“But it was not in this direction that Esaias felt himself drawn. Instead of following the academic doctrines and devoting himself to the pompous compositions that delighted the *Italianisants*, he inclined towards those simpler subjects that nature, with its inexhaustible wealth, offered him at every step. Besides, there began to be felt, as it were, a breath of new life; and, after having played a decisive rôle in the history of the freeing of the nation, Haarlem was thus called upon to assure its artistic emancipation. . . . Hals, scarcely ten years older than van de Velde, was then just arriving at the summit of his fame; and his love of nature, the freedom and the precocious certainty of his execution, were all the more

striking because of the contrast they presented with the academic traditions that had hitherto prevailed. By his side, while drawing inspiration from his swift and animated method of execution, Esaias conserved his entire originality; and, in a more modest sphere, by his consistent determination to treat only subjects taken from the familiar life and natural aspect of his country, he played an important part in forming the Dutch school, and fixing its character.”<sup>1</sup>

From 1612 Esaias belonged to the Guild of Saint Luke, and in 1617 he was admitted to the Chamber of Rhetoric of the *Wyngaardranken*, of which Frans Hals and his brother Dirck were the same year elected honorary members. He moved almost immediately to The Hague, however; for the following year, 1618, his name is found on the rolls of the Guild of that city. Perhaps, it is suggested, he may have been attracted there by the presence of the art-loving warrior, Prince Maurice, of whom he gradually became the favorite painter. On the death of Maurice he continued to enjoy the favor of his successor, Prince Frederick Henry, who displayed a still more marked taste for the fine arts, and he painted many pictures representing military incidents and scenes of court life for this patron. Of these the most important, perhaps, is the *Surrender of Bois-le-Duc* (1629), which, painted in a mood of patriotic fervor, shows the Spanish garrison evacuating the town, in great haste and disarray.

A year after painting this picture, Esaias van de Velde, scarcely forty years old, and in the full maturity of his talent, died at The Hague, where he was buried on the 18th of November, 1630. With him dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Les Van de Velde*. Émile Michel. P. 10.

appeared one of the most memorable artists of the initial period of the Dutch school, belonging as has been said, to that group of precursors who, with Mierevelt, Moreelse, Ravesteyn, Keyser and Molyn, found in the contemporary life and the natural aspect of their country, subjects for study to which they attached themselves exclusively, and which, through sheer force of sincerity and talent, they were able to render interesting.

As a painter he covered a wide range. Historic scenes, "conversations," landscapes — every vital interest of that time, every aspect of nature, found a place in his work. Nor was he a painter only. During his prentice days he acquired the craft of the etcher and engraver, and while yet at Haarlem published several plates, either after the works of his contemporary, Willem Buytewech, whose drawings resemble his, or after his own compositions. Here, as in his paintings, he found inspiration exclusively in the life about him. "Costumes, diversions, memorable events, or slight incidents of daily life. Buytewech and van de Velde both alike record all that interested them, and their work forms for us to-day a sort of illustrated journal, equally precious from the point of view of art and of history."

Thus one plate — among the first — shows a whale stranded on the beach at Nordwyck and surrounded by a crowd of curious spectators who have come from every part of the surrounding country to enjoy the spectacle. This cannot, however, have been so very unusual, since Matham had already recorded (1591) a similar incident near Katwyck, and a later engraving (1617), by Buytewech, shows a third dead whale somewhere between the latter place and Scheveningen.

It was after a drawing by Buytewech that Esaias van



ESAIAS VAN DE VELDE. A FARM

Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{7}{8}$  inches

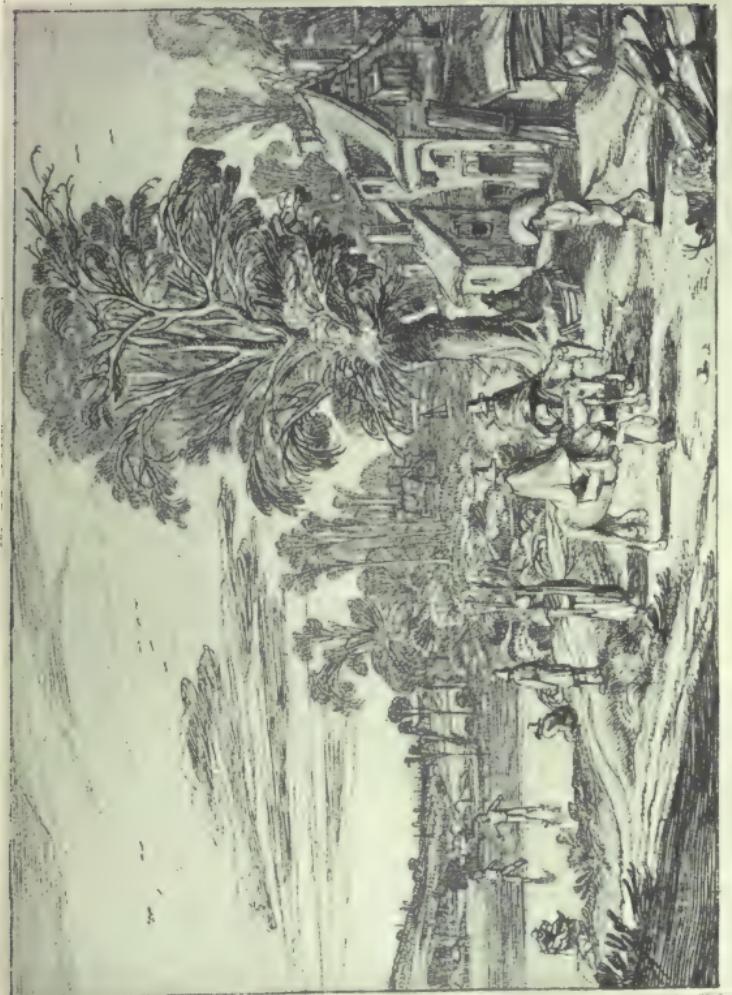
In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

de Velde etched the plate, very rare to-day, which preserves for us the memory of an assassination that made a great stir at the time, owing to the prominence both of the victim and of his murderers. The former was a rich Amsterdam goldsmith named Jan van Weely, who was also a painter and one of the most distinguished connoisseurs and collectors of the period. One day, when van Weely had come to The Hague to bring some jewels intended for the Court, a certain Jan van Parys, *valet de chambre*, and his accomplice, Jan de la Vigne, cadet of Prince Maurice's guards, threw themselves upon the unhappy merchant and cut his throat, in order to secure the jewels. Esaias' plate, divided into several compartments, reproduces diverse scenes connected with this brutal outrage: the death of Jan van Weely and the discovery of his body in a side street; the portraits of the two assassins, with their names; and finally their execution at The Hague, in the presence of a great crowd.

Later Esaias etched a plate showing the breaking of the dyke at Leck, in the outskirts of Utrecht, on the 10th of January, 1624, which inundated a great extent of country, and whose effects were felt even in the streets of Amsterdam.

“In these various works,” writes M. Michel, “Esaias appears as a scrupulous observer of reality. However, his preoccupation with scrupulous exactitude is little favorable to the artistic expression of the episodes he has treated and the very clear but somewhat dry notation to which he has recourse would give but a very insufficient idea of his talent.”

Still, there is much that is delightful, even from the strictly artistic standpoint, in many of Esaias' plates, and especially in the earliest of them all, the series of little



ESAIAS VAN DE VELDE. WINTER LANDSCAPE

Size of the original drawing,  $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Royal Print Room, Amsterdam

landscapes the motives of which are said to be derived from the country about the artist's home in the neighborhood of Haarlem. "Somewhat elementary" these motives are, it is true. The tree forms, in particular, are rudimentary in the extreme, and the artist makes hardly any attempt to represent foliage. But there is a style, a distinction, in the simple outline indications of this true observer, that is often lacking in the far more accomplished work of many of his successors. Moreover, the mere absence of leaves does not really matter so very much after all, since this merely means the choice of one season instead of another, and Esaias van de Velde's plates always seem charged with the crisp, clear, wholesome, vigorous, and invigorating spirit of winter. In one he makes bare tree-tops toss and sway violently in a fierce wind that sweeps across the flat, unbroken Dutch fields, and in another he gives us one of those characteristic skating scenes that extend over the entire period of Dutch etching, and make us, through their suggestive line, almost feel the cold, brittle texture of the ice, as well as hear the merry ring of the skates as all — small boys and sturdy burghers alike — skim lightly over the smooth surface of the canals and frozen water-meadows. Surely Esaias van de Velde, while far from being one of the great etchers of Dutch landscape, is a worthy pioneer of the movement, and has in all his work truth, honesty of purpose, excellent feeling for design, and a certain quaint, homely charm, to commend him.

## II

The second son of Jan van de Velde, the calligrapher, was also called Jan. He was probably born in Rotter-



ESAIAS VAN DE VELDE. SKATERS

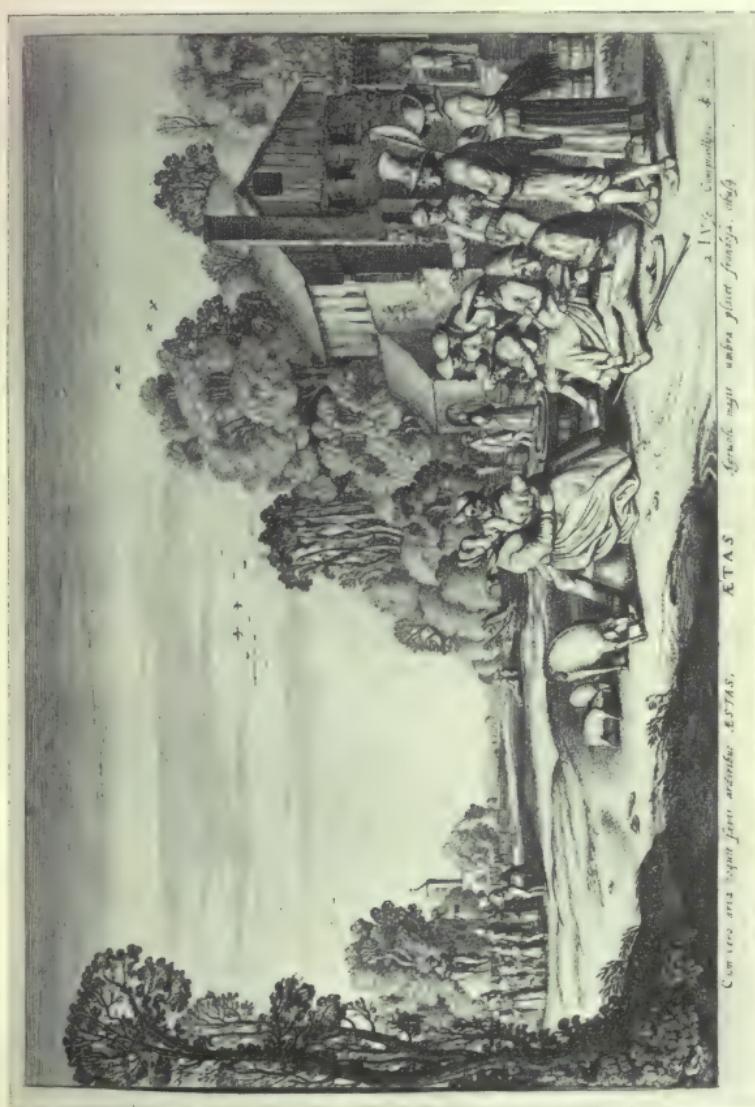
Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

dam between 1595 and 1597, but his father sent him to Haarlem to study with the famous engraver and pen-draughtsman, Jacob Matham, stepson of the still more celebrated handler of the burin, Goltzius.

Three letters addressed by Jan the Elder, to his son during the latter's apprenticeship have been preserved — one from 1613, the other two from 1617 — and they are of the highest value and interest, not only because of the information they afford concerning the family of the van de Veldes, but also because of the light they shed on the manners and customs of the period. From Rotterdam, where he was still living, the old schoolmaster sends his son good advice, and exhorts him to practise the severest economy. He does not want to cut down the term of Jan's apprenticeship, but this entails heavy sacrifices, and there are times when the school brings in little money. He is anxious, therefore, that Jan, when not actually engaged in his studies or in helping his master, according to the terms of their agreement, should find leisure for some lucrative employment; but he dares not speak openly of this for fear it might be misinterpreted by Matham. Meanwhile he himself seeks to make a little money in Haarlem by sending to a friend there, — a schoolmaster like himself, named Gillam, — through his son, an album of handwriting specimens containing about one hundred sheets, for which he hopes to get one hundred florins. For he thinks a florin a sheet a very modest price to put upon his wares.

With the news and remembrances of the family, he sends also from time to time to Matham's boarder a little money, new shoes to be called for at the boatman's, or a pair of sleeves made for him by his mother. She, to soften as far as she can the life of the exile, sends him



JAN VAN DE VELDE. SUMMER. FROM "THE FOUR SEASONS"

Size of the original etching,  $11\frac{3}{8} \times 17$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

"four florins and one sou," while awaiting his visit. Jan's prentice work is placed by his father, for trifling sums, it is true, "but something has to be sacrificed in order to become known, and later he will earn more. . . . Let him do his best to perfect himself in the meantime, seeking rather to progress in his art than to make money immediately, without, however, neglecting the slight opportunities that come to him." Then, after renewing his counsels on the score of economy, for "he has many expenses and business is bad," the good father insists upon the necessity of advancing in his studies, so as to be able to engrave his own compositions; "since it is better to invent than to copy others." He ends with a recommendation to his son to "fear the Lord and remain virtuous; in this way he will be happy and will be regarded with favor by God and all good people."

These sage counsels were faithfully followed, and Jan II no doubt all his life adhered to the orderly and laborious habits thus contracted in his early years, or he could never have produced the vast amount of work executed by him. This appears to have been entirely, or almost entirely, as etcher, engraver and pen-draughtsman. For, while there are many drawings and numberless engravings signed with his name, there are in existence to-day no paintings known certainly to be from his hand.

It is above all as an etcher and engraver that he is remembered, and the catalogue<sup>1</sup> of his work compiled by Franken and van der Kellen contains no fewer than five hundred pieces. All kinds of subjects are here represented: portraits, landscapes, allegories, scenes from contemporary life, illustrations for descriptive works,

<sup>1</sup> *L'Œuvre de Jan Van de Velde.* D. Franken et J. Ph. van der Kellen. Amsterdam; Frederik Muller et C<sup>ie</sup>. Paris; Rapilly. 1883.



JAN VAN DE VELDE. EARTH. FROM "THE FOUR ELEMENTS"

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{3}{8} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

poetical compositions, fables, collections of songs like those of J. Starter or Brederoo — van de Velde refuses nothing. It is this scope that above all makes his output so interesting at the present day.

Like Esaias, Jan is thoroughly of his time and of his country, and, like a careful witness, he faithfully records every fact. Yet while he remained frankly Dutch, there are indications in certain of his plates that he may possibly have travelled beyond the confines of his own country. In a series of *Months*, dated 1618, and dedicated to his friend, the brother of Rubens' master, Pieter van Veen, Syndic of The Hague, himself a painter, the landscape of the month of October looks as if it might be a drawing from nature on the banks of the Rhine, with its castles and terraced vineyards. Those who contest this theory, however, like Franken and Michel, point out that these indications have no very marked character or precision. They incline rather to the theory that the artist, wishing to introduce some variety into his work, simply yielded to the "temptation to show to the inhabitants of a flat country like Holland the mountainous landscape of the shores of the Rhine or the Moselle."

*A fortiori*, the same argument applies to the theory, advanced by such good critics as Riegel and Bode, that Jan van de Velde went to Italy, with so many of his compatriots at this period, and there worked directly under the eyes of Adam Elsheimer in Rome. But the Italian motives found in his work are, all told, limited to two unsigned plates: the *View of Torre di Conti* and the *Castello Sant' Angelo*, which are only copies of two large etchings by Willem Nieuwlant, and the two *Views of Rome*. These last, it is true, are signed and dated 1617 and



JAN VAN DE VELDE. AIR. FROM "THE FOUR ELEMENTS"

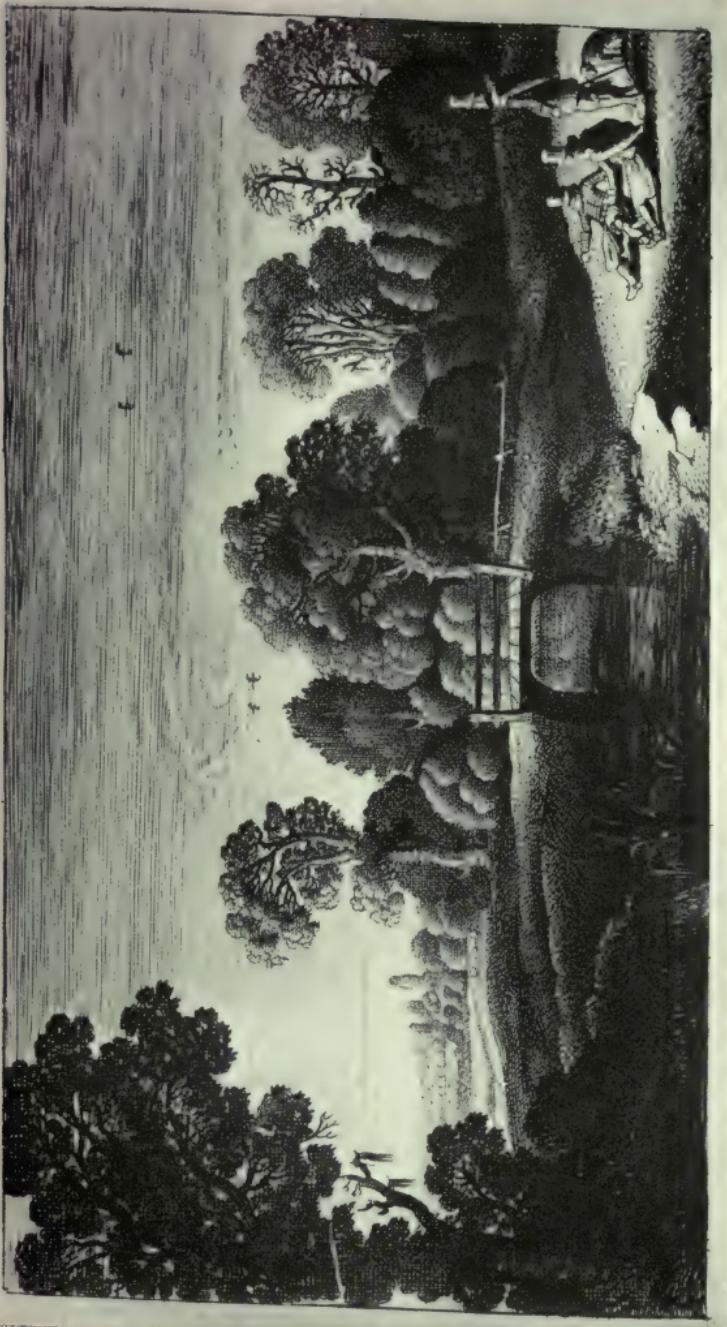
Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{3}{8} \times 11\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

1618 respectively. But they might have been inspired equally by the numerous prints of the Italianate school, — Goudt, Uytenbroeck, Lastman, the brothers Pynas, and many others, — which van de Velde could have seen in the house of his master, Matham.

The question remains of Elsheimer's influence, whether directly or indirectly exerted, upon Jan van de Velde's work, and more especially in those plates, either after his own designs or those of others, which show preoccupation with luminous effects and with those strong contrasts of light and shade, through which he became one of the immediate precursors of Rembrandt. But consideration of this point must be postponed till a future article, in which an attempt will be made to take up the whole subject of Elsheimer's influence upon his contemporaries, and particularly upon the Dutch artists — painters and etchers — of the seventeenth century.

Jan van de Velde's character and talent won him the esteem of his confrères and fellow-countrymen. In 1623 he paid his homage to the city of Haarlem in the shape of several plates printed on satin, in honor of the Prince of Orange. In 1625 he again made the offer of a certain number of impressions of a set of twenty prints showing the *Funeral of Prince Maurice*, for which he had obtained from the States-General the year before the privilege for eight years. But apparently the printing, which was to have been supervised by Jacob de Gheyn, was not quite satisfactory; for not only was the offer not accepted, but van de Velde was enjoined to withdraw from sale those copies that had already been put in circulation. As a result of this decision, he doubtless gave greater care to this publication; for, in 1627, his request was granted and the sale of one of these sets is recorded.



JAN VAN DE VELDE. NOON. FROM "TIMES OF THE DAY" (Small Series)

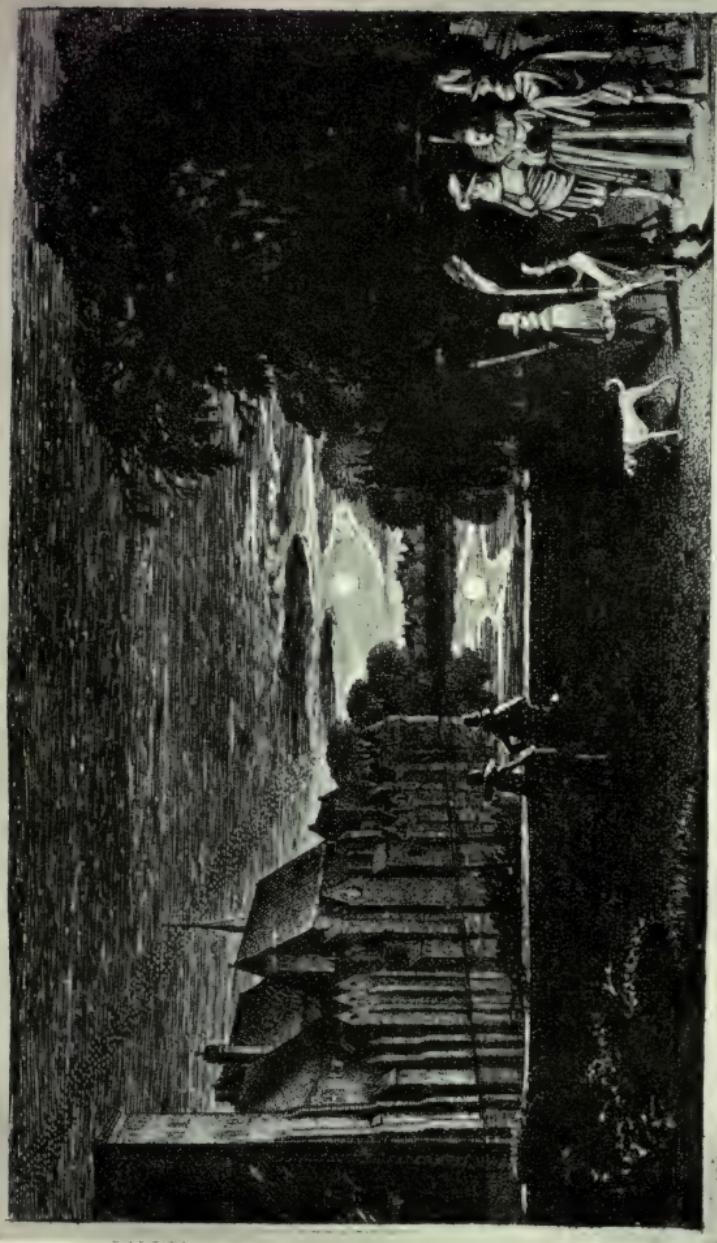
Size of the original etching,  $3\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Meanwhile his talent brought him many private commissions, and in his *Description of Haarlem*, published in 1628, J. Ampzing boasts of the merits of his collaborator and his skill "which permits him to rival the strongest." It is known also that van de Velde instructed several pupils and that, in 1635, he figured among the commissioners of the Guild. Because of his sound taste and known impartiality he was even charged, in 1636, with Solomon Ruysdael and the engraver Cornelis van Kittensteyn, to appraise the pictures which formed part of a lottery organized by the Guild, and among which were three paintings by his brother Esaias.

From this moment all trace is lost of him at Haarlem. At some time, for reasons unknown, he moved from that city to Enkhuyesen, where he was still living in 1641. Misfortune seems to have overtaken him, however, for the life he led in this latter place was most precarious. He was obliged to sell his plates at a low price, and to execute works of large dimensions, to pay his most pressing debts. He died before the middle of the following year, 1642, leaving a widow and a son, Jan III, who was not, however, an artist.

In Jan van de Velde's landscape etchings, which are often as much the work of the burin as of the acid, and which often contain more or less woodenly drawn figures, we find much the same primitive quality as in those of his brother Esaias, if not quite the same style and distinction. "It must be admitted, that the execution, often rather awkward, betrays insufficient study; that in general the trees are grossly indicated, either with dense ball-like foliage or else sticking straight up like aigrettes; that, when bare, they present, like Esaias', the appearance of coral branches; and that, finally, the



JAN VAN DE VELDE. NIGHT. FROM "TIMES OF THE DAY" (Small Series)

Size of the original etching,  $3\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

differences in their foliage are painfully expressed by a hand that betrays its lack of experience. But the facility, the spirit, the general aspect of the sketch made swiftly and without pretension, more than compensate for these imperfections of detail. One feels the circulation here of a new sap; and the sentiment of certain beauties of nature, till then unknown, justifies that ingenuous title, *Regiunculae amœnissimæ*, which van de Velde himself gave these naïve representations. Although decidedly crude, these attempts at least reveal to us franker, more direct impressions of nature."

Jan van de Velde was a very popular artist in his own day. The numerous editions which were printed of his *Months*, his *Seasons*, his *Times of the Day*, his repeated suites of little *Landscapes*, bear witness to the success which greeted these publications. "Highly appreciated by his contemporaries, these collections, whose contents were without doubt much copied, helped to spread everywhere the taste for simplicity. With his talent, quite secondary though it was, the artist, at that date, played an important and useful rôle. In the period of confusion, of movements and strivings in every direction, that marked the beginnings of Dutch art, when this art seemed still undecided as to its choice among the divers currents which solicited it, Jan van de Velde powerfully contributed to inspire it with the love of nature, and to show the entire sincerity which must be brought to its study. For this reason his own works hold worthily their place beside those by his brother artists which his burin reproduced."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Les Van de Velde.* Émile Michel. P. 46.



*Prabat jam medio currum liberat in aere: Meridio ligruit, attenua ornis. Hanc gramme nigra,  
Egnis et effato manat e corore sudore. 2  
Cum grovis atq; viris crax exsuperulit auctus*

JAN VAN DE VELDE. NOON. FROM "TIMES OF THE DAY" (Large Series)

Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

### III

Willem the Elder, the last of the sons of Jan I, was born in Leyden, according to Houbraken, and probably of a second marriage; for a long interval separates his birth, in 1611 or 1612, from that of Esaias and of Jan II. Little information exists as to his early life, and it is merely known that he came, while still quite young, to Amsterdam, where he too embraced the career of an artist, though his talent took an entirely different bent from that followed by his two brothers. Even more than they he was to become distinguished through his skill as a pen-draughtsman — a skill which, as it were, formed a family tradition among the sons of the calligrapher of Rotterdam. Those ships, with spread sails, such as are found mingled with the ornamentation of Jan the Elder's capitals, became the almost exclusive subject of Willem's art. He loved to observe them; and, by dint of studying them in the least details of their structure and rigging, he so thoroughly familiarized himself with their forms, that the knowledge and talent he displayed in their representation soon attracted the attention of amateurs, and even of the members of the Council of the Admiralty.

The navy at this time had come to play a most important part in the life of the Dutch nation. Freed from alien domination, the Dutch had greatly extended their foreign commerce, till they threatened to dispute the empire of the sea with the English, once their allies, now their jealous rivals. In preparation for the conflict which already appeared inevitable, Holland carefully built up her fleet. As it grew, the Admiralty felt the increasing importance of keeping exactly informed as to its com-



JAN VAN DE VELDE. EVENING. FROM "TIMES OF THE DAY" (Large Series)

Size of the original etching, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  X 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

position, the changes that improvements in artillery from time to time rendered necessary, the state of each separate unit, and its seaworthiness. The precision and scrupulous fidelity of Willem's drawing, were just what were needed for this purpose. Thus, about 1661, on the demand of the Council of the Admiralty, Willem van de Velde was attached to its service, by virtue of a Commission of the States-General. A small boat, or galiot, placed at his disposal, made it possible for him to take up his position at the best points for the representation of the different vessels in the reviews or evolutions in which they participated.

The artist is said to have acquitted himself of this task with remarkable zeal and punctuality. Not content with following the pacific manœuvres of the squadron, this ancestor of the modern war correspondent even witnessed its engagements with the enemy, seeking to reproduce these in such a way as to afford his compatriots useful information for the study of naval tactics.

It was thus that he was able to record some of the combats which, from June 11 to June 14, 1666, took place between the English and Dutch fleets, commanded, respectively, by Monk and de Ruyter, in the memorable "Four Days' Battle." Carried away by his zeal, van de Velde more than once ran serious risks during this campaign. It is even reported that, at the outset, he happened to be on board the flagship during the last meal of Opdam, the commander of the Dutch fleet, only a few minutes before the vessel blew up.

The artist's reputation traveled far, and mention has been found in the archives of Genoa of several designs he executed for that maritime capital of Italy. Naturally his talent and his services to the Admiralty at-



WILLEM VAN DE VELDE. MAN-OF-WAR

Size of the original drawing,  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{8}$  inches

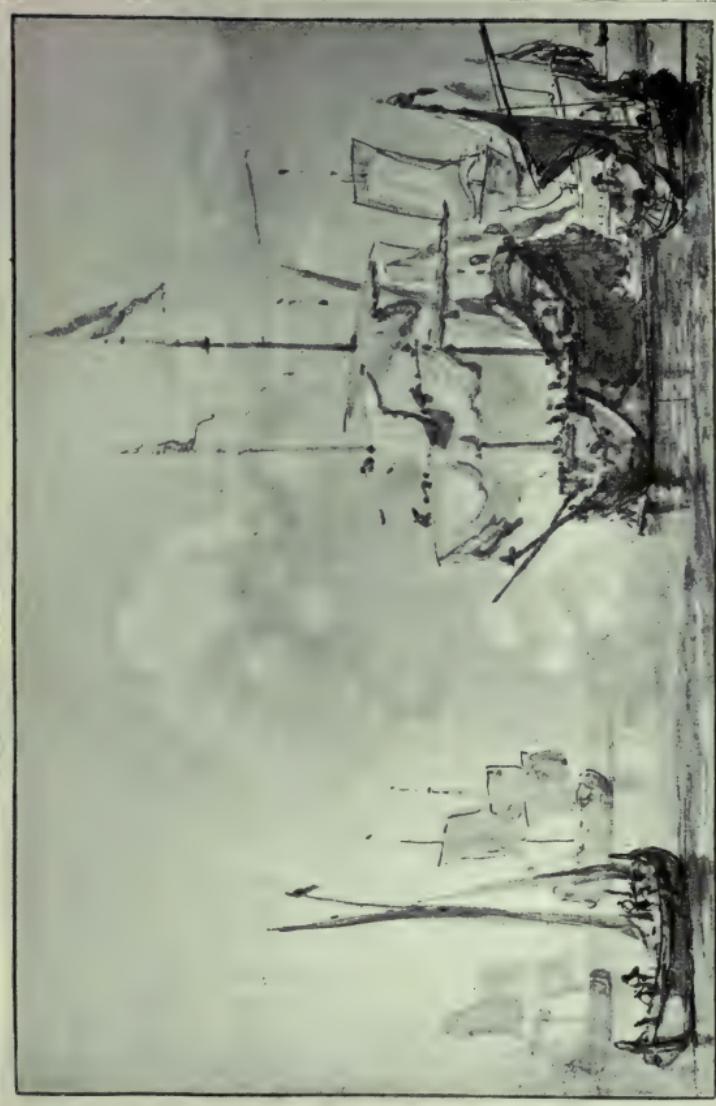
In the Royal Print Room, Berlin

tracted the attention of the English; and, influenced no doubt, by the advantages they offered him, van de Velde decided to leave Holland and put himself in their pay. Perhaps Charles II had known him during his stay in Holland after the death of his father, and had there conceived the project of attaching the artist to his person. Whatever the motives that determined Willem to expatriate himself, it is certain they were not those of treachery to his new masters. For, as the same authority points out, the charge brought against him by Horace Walpole that, in 1666, he led the English fleet into the island of Schelling, and set fire to it at Bandairs, rests on no foundation of fact; for Willem was still in Holland at that period.

For the rest, it does not appear that his compatriots bore him any ill will for having thus abandoned them; for when, later, his son, Willem II, who, like him, was to spend a large part of his life in England, returned to Amsterdam, he was heartily welcomed and even received commissions from his fellow-citizens. After having been successively attached, as marine painter, first to Charles II, then to James II, Willem van de Velde died in London, in 1693, and was buried there in the Church of Saint James.

#### IV

Though many of his drawings were reproduced by others, Willem van de Velde, unlike his contemporaries, Zeeman and Backhuysen, who also made a specialty of ships and shipping, seems never to have produced any plates himself. The same is true of his first son, Willem II, a much more considerable artist than his father, with



WILLEM VAN DE VELDE. SHIPPING SCENE  
Size of the original drawing,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{3}{8}$  inches

whom, however, he became associated in the Admiralty Commission until he too went to England, where he remained to the day of his death, April 6, 1707. Willem's second son, Adriaen, the most distinguished, in many ways, of all the van de Veldes, was, however, an excellent etcher, and will always take high rank by reason of his admirable studies of animals in that medium.

Adriaen van de Velde was born in Amsterdam in 1635 or 1636. As the youngest member of such a family, he could hardly have hoped to escape an artistic career, even if he had not actually displayed marked talent and aptitude from the start. His uncles doubtless encouraged his first attempts, and it is generally agreed that his precocity was extreme. At school his books were covered with sketches, and it is reported that, with colors borrowed from his brother Willem, he painted on the panels of his bed the picture of a *Milkmaid*, that was long preserved in the family.

His father, absorbed by the duties of his official position and thus unable himself to undertake his son's artistic education, was obliged to choose another master; and, just as he had sent Willem II to study with the distinguished marine artist, Simon de Vlieger, so he apprenticed Adriaen to Jan Wynants, who at that time enjoyed a great celebrity, and exerted considerable influence upon the development of landscape painting in the school of Haarlem. Possibly Adriaen may already have received in Amsterdam lessons from some other master; for he displayed such proficiency in his art that Wynants' wife predicted to her husband that "this student would soon surpass his master." However, far from conceiving any jealousy of him on this account, the older artist was always delighted at his pupil's

progress and maintained close personal relations with him, as friend and collaborator, till the latter's death.

In Wynants' studio, Adriaen van de Velde had as a fellow-student the painter Philip Wouwerman, with whom, in spite of a difference of some years in their ages, he formed the closest friendship. Following Wouwerman's example, Adriaen, eager to learn, instead of limiting himself, like Wynants, to landscape alone, extended the field of his studies. Deeply in love with Nature, he never tired of consulting her; and, in the lovely fields that lie about Haarlem, he found diverse and seductive material.

"The sea and its shores, the watercourses shaded with oaks and willow, the deserted dunes, the grassy plains or the secular woods, the farms and the villages with their population of peasants, shepherds or sailors, the herds of different sorts that give life to this admirable landscape — he had all these at his hand to choose from. All attracted him equally; and, with an equal sincerity, he attacked them one after the other."

Several of Adriaen's works, or certain details of the buildings introduced by him into several of his paintings or etchings, might, as in the case of Jan II, incline us to believe that he had visited Italy. But, aside from the fact that none of his biographers mentions such a voyage, these motives from Italian landscape remain too vague, too indeterminate, to be regarded, on the whole, as more than a tribute paid to the fashion of the time — a sort of *pastiches* inspired by Nicolaes Berchem or Carel du Jardin.

It is the same with certain academic conventions that occasionally crop out in his work. The fondness for ruins and for Biblical and mythological subjects that he

shares with most of his contemporaries, is equally a concession to popular taste. He is most at his ease in those simpler subjects in which he derives his inspiration directly from what he sees, and takes his models from the life about him.

“And if, even in these simpler subjects, he happens to introduce some stock idyllic element, it is not through affectation or mannerism. In depicting the delightful sides of pastoral life, he merely follows the bent of his talent and his taste. It is with the poetry, without effort, but not without grace, of a Dutch Theocritus, that he shows us, beneath the dense shade, shepherds and shepherdesses engaged in converse by springs and brooks, or dancing to the strains of some rustic music while, by their side, their flocks graze or drink the running water.”<sup>1</sup>

It is these animals that are the real persons of his pictures. The artist was thoroughly acquainted with their structure, and he neglected no means of information in order to acquire an even fuller knowledge. There is even reason to believe that he made certain models for his own use. M. Michel found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in a *dossier* containing prints by or after Adriaen van de Velde, three photographs representing, from as many different points of view, the statuette of a cow lying down with one of her legs outstretched, the other three drawn up under her. “The execution . . . is at once broad, precise, and lifelike; the naïvely chosen pose, rendered very sincerely with perfect truth. The rectangular pedestal bears upon two of its faces the inscription in Dutch characters of the period: *Adriaan van den Velde fecit 1659.*”

<sup>1</sup> *Les Van de Velde.* Émile Michel. Pp. 80-82.



ADRIAEN VAN DE VELDE. OX AND SHEEP  
Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

"If in the drawing of his animals van de Velde does not attain the scrupulous and learned precision of Paul Potter, he has certainly, with an equal sincerity and with an even greater ease and abandon, a sentiment of life which, if not more penetrating, is at least richer and more varied. He knows how to paint, not only the goats, sheep, dogs, horses, cows, that he excels in grouping, but every living creature, and is able to give to each beast its special physiognomy."

These characteristic traits of van de Velde's treatment of animal life in other media are to be found equally in his etchings. Bartsch counts about twenty-two of them dating from 1653 to 1670 — numbers 17 to 21, executed with "a fine and rather wiry line," in 1653, at the age of seventeen or eighteen. Numbers 1 to 10 are dated from 1657 to 1659, by which time the artist had acquired his full superiority.

"One sees nothing to place above them," says Bartsch, "for correctness of drawing, truth of the animal characters, their attitudes, the just rendering of their muscles, and the careful perfection of the smallest details."

"Who had taught Adriaen the art of etching?" asks M. Michel. We do not know. Neither his uncle Jan II nor his uncle Esaias was any longer alive in 1653 to teach him. "But the apprenticeship must have been an easy one in any case, for the work with him is never very complicated. It reduces itself to what is strictly necessary, and for the rest, full reliance is placed upon the science of the accomplished draughtsman.

"In these etchings all is clear, intelligible; the silhouettes are indicated with perfect justice, and the effect is very frankly achieved in a few strokes. The

first plate, dated 1653, and entitled *The Shepherd, the Shepherdess and the Sheep* (B. 17), still denotes some inexperience; the cow's legs are too long, her head is not lifelike, the landscape is awkwardly drawn, and not without some stiffness. But the following year, beginning with the *Bullock and Cowherd* (B. 1), he is already the master. This time the drawing is absolutely correct yet perfectly free, the print is full of sunlight and color. The animals are shown to us surprised in their familiar poses, in their true milieu, with their good, kindly faces, and the blissful nonchalance of beasts free and well fed.”<sup>1</sup>

In short, though Adriaen van de Velde's etchings constitute but a small and relatively unimportant part of his work, they, by themselves, would entitle him to a high rank. “Van de Velde, if not a great artist, was a true one,” says Mr. Laurence Binyon, “and his early death at the age of thirty-seven was a loss to the art of Holland.”

<sup>1</sup> *Les Van de Velde.* Émile Michel. P. 86.

# THE ETCHINGS OF JACOB RUYSDAEL

## I

ONE of the most significant figures in the history of Dutch landscape etching in the seventeenth century, is Jacob Ruysdael — one of the most original also. Who his master was — if, indeed, he had a master — is unknown, and it is difficult to discover a close relation between him and any of the etchers who preceded him, or who were his contemporaries. Rembrandt's friend, Roelant Roghman, etched a few plates somewhat in Ruysdael's manner, notably the one entitled *In the Seunig Wood*; but, judging by the radically different character of by far the greater part of Roghman's work, that older artist would seem rather to have been affected by Ruysdael than to have exerted any serious influence upon him. Thus, in a sense, Ruysdael stands alone, a solitary figure in his art, as in his life. It is not too much to say that he broke completely with the tradition of the past, and inaugurated a wholly new era in the history of etching. This does not mean that there had not been a steady and continuous advance in the development of the art from the time of the van de Veldes. Pieter Molyn, Jan van Goyen, Swanevelt, Vlieger, Saftleven and his pupils, Jan van Aken and Jan Almeloveen, of the Rhine

school, and finally Allardt van Everdingen, had, in their turn, all carried forward the technique of etching, refining its methods and extending its resources, so that the accomplished little plates of the last-mentioned artist are a very different matter from the crude, primitive, but always sincere and often spirited productions of Jan and Esaias van de Velde. But the gulf between Everdingen and these pioneers is scarcely greater than that between him and Ruysdael. Everdingen's line still bears some relation to the tight, graver-like manner of the old school. Ruysdael's, on the contrary, is pure etched line, loosely flowing and free — the line of a man who approached the special problems of the copper-plate from the point of view of the painter, rather than of the engraver, and who invented, for his own purposes of expression, a method with the needle at once absolutely individual, and absolutely idiomatic.

## II

Very little of Ruysdael's solitary and disappointed life is definitely known. It is generally asserted, though there is absolutely no contemporary evidence to support the tradition that he was born in Haarlem, and the date of his birth has been variously conjectured from 1635 (which would cause him to have painted his first pictures at the age of twelve!) to 1625 or thereabouts. This last is the generally accepted opinion to-day.

It seems fairly certain, however, that his father, Isaak Ruysdael, was a picture-dealer and frame-maker, and that Jacob himself was originally destined to be a doctor. He is even said to have practised medicine for a time, and to have performed several successful

operations. If this be actually the case, Ruysdael was almost, if not quite, the first artist on record to abandon medicine for art; but he was by no means the last. In our own time, the famous English etcher, Seymour Haden, was a surgeon, and did not begin to etch till relatively late in life. Ruysdael, on the contrary, must have exchanged the scalpel for the paint-brush and the etcher's needle at an early date, having as his master, according to tradition, the painter-etcher of the Italianate school, Nicolaes Berchem.

Whether or not he was actually born there, all Ruysdael's early work was done in or about Haarlem. He entered the Guild there in 1648, but about 1655 he removed to Amsterdam — presumably in the hope of finding a greater number of purchasers for his pictures. That his expectations on this score were disappointed, and that he was far from assuring his fortunes in that city where, in 1655, he obtained his citizenship, seems positive; for, in 1681, having as the result of a serious illness returned to Haarlem, his friends among the Mennonites, of which sect he was a member, made application to the burgomasters of Haarlem to procure for him a place in the local almshouse. There, so far as we can tell, he died on March 23, 1682, on which date the records show "the opening of a tomb for Jacob Ruysdael in the Church of Saint Bavon, on the south side, No. 177. Expense, 4 florins."

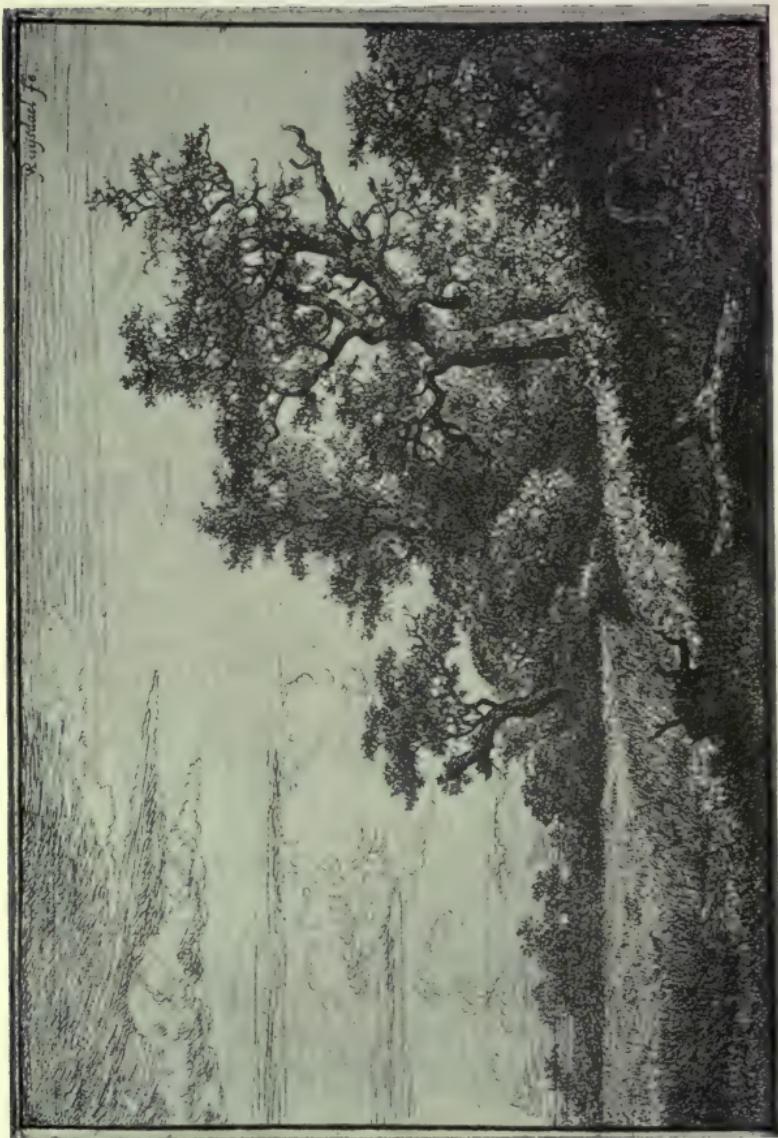
The artist's life was very lonely and laborious, and it is to its somewhat tragic cast that is commonly attributed the spirit of pensive melancholy that pervades his pictures; though this is, to say the least, a rather naïve assumption, and doubtless his expression would have been the same had he dwelt in riches

rather than in poverty. He never married, and for many years he supported his father, the frame-maker, who, on April 11, 1668, signed an instrument ceding to his son all he possessed or hoped to possess in the future, in payment of sums that his son had lent him. To provide for them both, Jacob had to work incessantly, turning out pictures that were little appreciated in spite of the great variety of motive that he introduced into them during the latter part of his life, in order to make them more interesting and readily salable.

"To have a complete collection of this master, representing him on every side," writes his cataloguer, Dutuit, "one must own a waterfall, the view of a plain, the interior of a forest, and a sea-piece."

"But where did he find the scenes he painted?" asks the perambulatory heroine of Mr. George Moore's novel, "The Lake." "Not in Holland, surely," she exclaims. "There are no waterfalls nor mountains in Holland, nor, so far as I know, a forest; not a single rough wood did we see."

So far as woods and forests are concerned, the mystery is easily enough solved; for no doubt, in Pater's words, "the eerie relics of the ancient Dutch woodland" still existed in Ruysdael's day. But the mountains and waterfalls have still to be explained, and they have puzzled other brains besides Miss Rose Leicester's. She hazards the theory that Ruysdael must have gone to Norway to paint, and the suggestion is ingenious, pointing straight to the true solution of the problem; for, though it is fairly certain that he never visited that country in person, he undoubtedly did so through his imagination, stimulated to this flight by the paintings and etchings of an artist who had



Ruyssdael

RUYSDAEL. THE WHEATFIELD  
Size of the original etching,  $3\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$  inches  
In the New York Public Library

actually been there, and whom Ruysdael found firmly established in Amsterdam, when he himself reached that city. This artist was Allardt van Everdingen.

The story of Everdingen's life is highly colored with the spirit of adventure, in contrast with the dull, drab annals of most of his fellow-craftsmen, with the exception of those who, like Swanenveld, Berchem, Jan Both, Breenbergh, and a few others, went to Italy to study and work. Born in 1621 and planning to become a marine painter, he embarked on a Baltic voyage, at the age of nineteen. The ship was wrecked, and he was cast away on the coast of Norway, where he remained for some time. Returning to Haarlem after four years, he began to paint pictures and make etchings of the wild and romantic Norwegian landscape, for which he had accumulated abundant materials in his notebooks. His success, apparently, was instantaneous, and was repeated in Amsterdam, to which city he removed in 1652. The burghers in both places were fascinated by these representations of a country whose aspect presented such a striking contrast to the flat plains and low dunes of their own Netherlands.

It was of these, under every light, as well as of the encircling sea and the over-arching sky, with its ever-changing cloud-architecture, that Ruysdael had already made himself the master, in a spirit of truth and of poetic insight that had been approached by none of his predecessors. But failure to appeal to the picture-buying public had had its effect upon him by this time; and, in his desperate need of money, he was not proof against the temptation to copy Everdingen, in order to steal a little of the latter's popularity.

“From this period,” writes Mr. Binyon, “dates the



ROYSDAEL. THE LITTLE BRIDGE

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{3}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$  inches

In the New York Public Library

lamentable change in Ruysdael's art. The master, whose native independence is so marked that one is at a loss to name his probable teacher,<sup>1</sup> of his own free will and in sheer mortification of spirit at his want of success, forces himself from the meadows and dunes of his delight, and invents, to win the patronage of the rich men of Amsterdam, a Norway of his own. A visit to North Germany, of which there is some evidence, helped his invention. Now begins the long series of waterfalls and pines and torrents so familiar in the picture galleries. It is not on them that Ruysdael's fame rests; on this ground Everdingen, in spite of his inferior merits as a painter, remains his master."<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately Everdingen's influence did not extend to Ruysdael as an etcher. All the latter's work in this field was done during the early years of his life, while still living in Haarlem, and painting in his simplest, sincerest, and most serious manner. Thus, while his etching is deficient in many technical respects, and may be of interest mainly as an illustration of his painting, it is at least an illustration of this painting at its best, and so bears a direct and significant relation to the essential genius of the artist in whom Dutch landscape painting reached the highest, purest, and noblest levels of its expression.

### III

Ruysdael's etchings are few in number. Bartsch enumerates seven only; and though Duplessis increases

<sup>1</sup> The similarity of Ruysdael's later painting style to that of Everdingen led early critics to see in the latter his probable master.

<sup>2</sup> *Dutch Etchers of the 17th Century.* By Laurence Binyon. *The Portfolio*, No. 21, September, 1895. London.

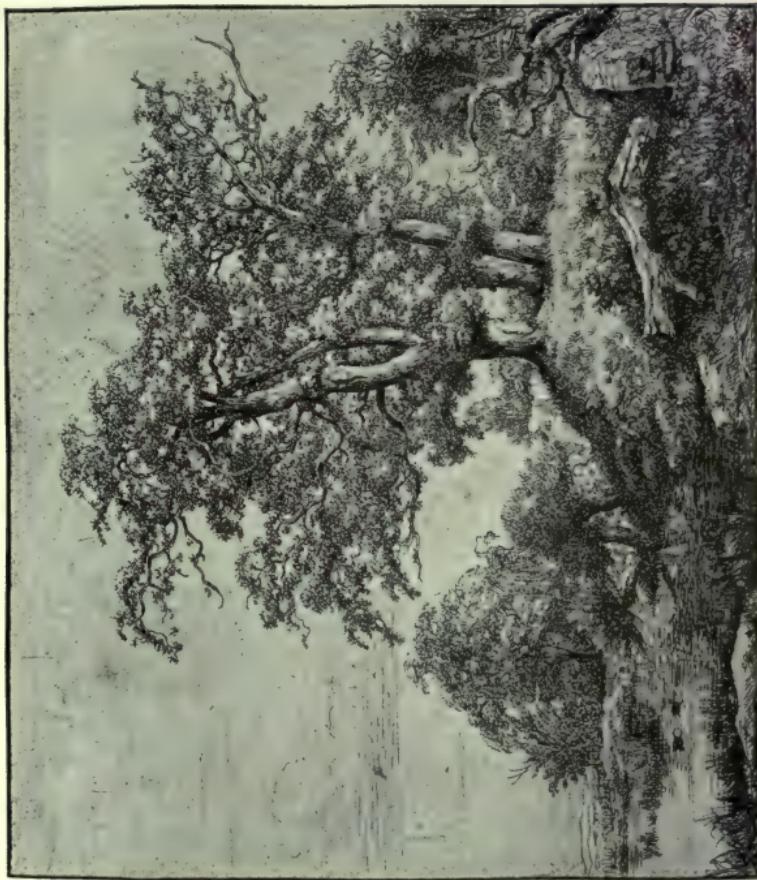
this total to twelve, and Dutuit to thirteen, the additions are mere examples of the master's prentice work. The others are rare also, especially in the first states, in which alone the beauty of the artist's conception is to be fully appreciated; for, in several instances, the plate has been reworked by another hand, and crude, clumsy clouds have been introduced into the sky, intentionally left clear by the artist. "What a satire on this consummate master of clouds!" exclaims Mr. Binyon.

Only one of Ruysdael's finished plates is dated. This is *The Three Oaks*, *The Three Great Oaks*, *The Bouquet of Oaks*, or *Landscape with Three Large Oaks* (B. 6), as it is variously called by different writers, which bears the date 1649. For this reason, and this alone, apparently, it was assumed by Duplessis that it was Ruysdael's first successful etching — the first that he cared to publish — and this assumption has been more or less tacitly accepted by later writers ever since. In our opinion, however, priority seems much more properly and plausibly to belong, on purely technical grounds, to *The Wheatfield* (B. 5). Certainly it is difficult to account for Mr. Binyon's suggestion that this plate alone may be a somewhat later work, coming, not only after *The Three Oaks*, but after all the others. Comparison of the line in *The Wheatfield* with that employed in these others, shows at once how niggling, uncertain, it is, in spite of the rich and warm effect of color achieved through it. Ruysdael's linework reaches its maximum of bold freedom and vigor in *The Two Peasants and Their Dog* (B. 2) and *The Travellers* (B. 4); but, though far less powerful and suggestive in *The Three Oaks*, it has already reached a high point of beauty and balance; and it is making excessive demands upon one's credul-

ity to ask him to believe that an artist like Ruysdael could possibly return to a method so inferior as that employed in *The Wheatfield*, after he had once abandoned this for something better. Even the success in suggesting color is an added support to this view; for color suggestion, in any but a very general and elementary way, is not a primary function of the engraving arts, and the unique insistence upon it, in this plate, merely strengthens the impression that *The Wheatfield* was made while the artist was still experimenting with the new medium, and still under the domination of his aims and methods as a painter.

Indeed, persistence of this same painter-like color quality, and preoccupation with tone and texture, though in a less marked degree, in the plate entitled *The Little Bridge* (B. 1), and particularly in the treatment of the large thatch-covered and ruinous farmhouse, or *chaumière*, which nearly fills the entire left half of the plate, would incline us to place this plate also before *The Three Oaks* in strict chronological order, and between it and *The Wheatfield*. In *The Three Oaks* the preoccupation of the artist is no longer with color, tone, and texture, but with form and structure, and he has already begun to feel out for himself a pure linear technique adequate to express his ideas on these subjects.

At this moment, too, Ruysdael's interest begins to centre more narrowly and exclusively upon trees as his preferred material in the etching medium, and he produced, after *The Three Oaks*, — in precisely what order it is no longer essential to determine, since all share a common motive and method, — the three plates, *The Two Peasants and Their Dog*, *The Travellers*, and



RUYSDAEL. THE THREE OAKS

Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$  inches

In the New York Public Library

*The Cottage on the Hill* (B. 3). Of the first, Koehler has given the following just and appreciative analysis and interpretation, which also seems to me to sum up better than anything else in English, the essential spirit of Ruysdael's art as an etcher.

"There is no color in this plate," he says, "and little suggestion of light and shade, while the too obvious division of the landscape into two distances or planes is a positive fault. But the *expression* in the trees, the success with which their character is given, that is to say, the character of trees in general, their sturdiness, the evidence of their battles with the elements, the reaching out of their arms into the air (not merely masses of foliage which hide all structure), the roots as they wind about and cling to the earth, upholding the great masses above them with the strength of a giant—all these tokens of the mysterious inner life of the tree are so forcibly and clearly put down, that they need no further help from color or chiaroscuro."

*The Cottage on the Hill*, which essays a similar subject, is less successful—a failure, in fact, as compared with the other, through the absence of an equally vigorous or characteristic suggestion of structure in the tree forms, and would seem likely to have been done before *The Two Peasants*, inasmuch as artists like Ruysdael, who are also thoughtful students of their art, make slow but steady progress, and tend to hold their ground once they have gained it. *The Travellers*, however, is a splendid exhibition of Ruysdael's fully developed power to treat his favorite material, and is, all things considered, the fullest, finest, and most effective plate he produced. Not only is it well handled technically, but it is full of the most romantic charm



RUYSDAEL. TWO PEASANTS AND THEIR DOG

Size of the original etching,  $7 \times 10\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

and mystery; so that, as our eye penetrates the twilit gloom of this wild and intricate woodland, where the water stands in stagnant pools among the great roots of the oaks and beeches, superbly characterized, and makes the forest floor almost a morass, we identify ourselves imaginatively with the two travellers who are seen dimly making their way in the middle distance, and share directly in their adventure.

An interesting drawing for this plate exists in the Berlin Museum, and shows us how seriously Ruysdael, in spite of his small accomplishment, numerically, took the art of etching.

“It would be a great mistake,” writes Duplessis, “to regard Ruysdael’s etchings as simple sketches destined to preserve momentarily the memory of a site before which the painter had stopped for an instant. There is more than an instantaneous impression in these etchings, and an artist no more improvises on the copper such plates as *The Wheatfield*, *The Three Oaks*, or *The Travellers*, than he improvises a painting on the canvas. Just as before deciding to execute the *Buisson* or the *Coup de Soleil*, numerous preparatory studies from nature were indispensable, so in the same way, the artist had to work a long time before publishing etchings treated with this care, this precision.”<sup>1</sup>

There is another drawing, in Munich, which seems as if it might very well have been just such a preparatory study for *The Three Oaks*. Certainly, in this instance, the artist, in the finished etching, has departed widely from the original study — if such indeed it be — and

<sup>1</sup> *Eaux-Fortes de J. Ruysdael. Reproduites et publiées par Amand-Durand. Texte par Georges Duplessis, Conservateur-adjoint du département des estampes à la Bibliothèque Nationale.* Paris, 1878.

it is interesting to note the eliminations and readjustments to which he resorted in order to bring his main tree-mass just where he wanted it on the plate, and to give it salient relief. "With the exception of some works of his earliest period," writes Dr. Bode, "Ruysdael's landscapes are composed, and their inner construction carefully thought and pondered over."<sup>1</sup> This ponderation is particularly evident in *The Three Oaks* — almost too evident, perhaps, so that its palpable calculation takes away something of the effect of force which it ought to give. Still it is a dignified, even noble, composition.

#### IV

Whichever one may decide, for various reasons, to accept as Ruysdael's first finished plate, final success, as usual, was preceded by a series of experiments and failures more or less complete. The first of all his attempts on copper was, according to Bartsch, that to which he gives the title, *The Brook Running through the Village* (B. 7), and which Dutuit calls *Landscape with Winding Brook Bordered by a Row of Six Willows*. But there is another — *Landscape with Thatched Cottage and Pig-Pen* (D. 9) — which bears the same date — 1646 — and must therefore be permitted to dispute with the former its claim to absolute priority.

These prints are extremely rare, two impressions of *The Brook* having been found in Vienna and Amsterdam, and a unique impression of the *Landscape* in

<sup>1</sup> *Great Masters of Dutch and Flemish Painting*. By Wilhelm Bode. Translated by Margaret L. Clark. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1909.



RUYDAEL. DRAWING FOR "THE TRAVELLERS"

Size of the original drawing,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Royal Museum, Berlin



RUYSDAEL. THE TRAVELLERS

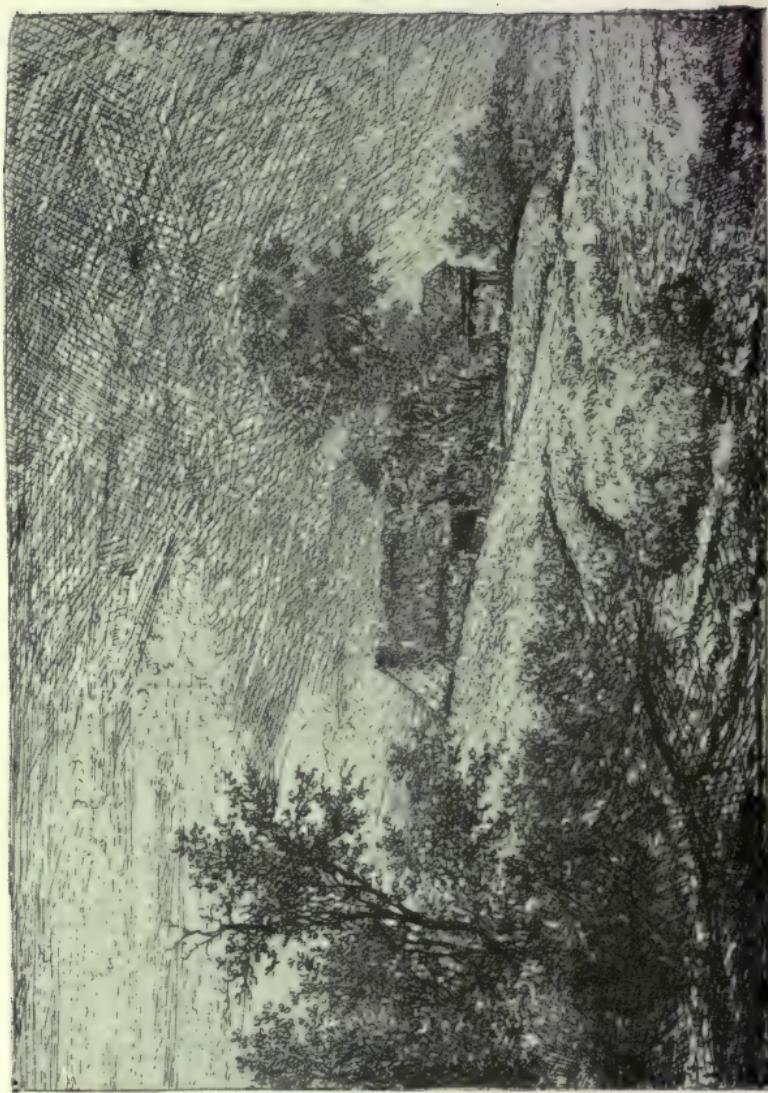
Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

the Museum at the latter place. In both there are unmistakable evidences of inexperience. In the first, for example, the artist, feeling that his foreground was inadequate, attempted to extend it about half an inch. But apparently he experienced such difficulties in joining the new work with the old, that he gave up the task in despair, and abandoned the plate. In the second, an attempt is made to render the tonalities of the sky and the effect of heavy massed clouds, in the spirit of a painter, by means of close hatchings of criss-cross lines, drawn more or less at random. The attempt was unsuccessful, but the plate remains interesting as a precursor for much modern work in the same manner — by such an artist as Rousseau, for example.

Accidents of another sort occurred to mar still a third plate, *Landscape with a Marsh — Pond*, Dutuit calls it — (D. 7), which bears the date of 1647. Having been rubbed and scratched in its most important part — namely, the central clump of trees which, in their mass and contours, suggest those in both *The Three Oaks* and *The Wheatfield*, though technically the treatment is much closer to that in the second — Ruysdael abandoned the plate as ruined beyond repair.

In addition to the foregoing, Ruysdael etched three little plates in the shape of ovals (D. 10, 11, 12), the first two placed the long way of the plate, the third upright. It is interesting to note that, though this little composition, which shows a group of willows beside a brook, is signed with the initials "J. R.," Bartsch, who had seen only an imperfect impression, with the bottom torn off, attributed it to Everdingen, describing it as No. 3 in his catalogue of that artist's work, though there is little, surely, in point of style, to warrant such an ascription.



RUYSDAEL. LANDSCAPE WITH THATCHED COTTAGE AND PIG-PEN

Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Rijks-Museum Amsterdam

Finally, there is a plate, *A Study of Foliage*, existing in a single impression in the British Museum. It is described for the first time by Dutuit in the "Supplément" to his Catalogue (No. 13); but while he admits that it may be by Ruysdael, he regards this attribution as doubtful. In any case, its interest lies principally in Ruysdael's preoccupation with a particular phase of his favorite subject — fascinating because of the very difficulties attending it. His success has been variously estimated. Bartsch calls Ruysdael's foliage, a "*griffonnement spirituellement confus*, composed of continuous zigzags, which serve marvellously to represent the truth of nature, whose forms ought not to be too clearly determined, if you wish to avoid the risk of falling into what is called *manner*. There is nothing here of so-called *method*, but there is everywhere a rare taste and charm."

Mr. Binyon, on the other hand, feels that Ruysdael "never succeeded in finding a quite satisfactory convention for foliage in etched line," but admits that "his continual feeling after truth of rendering, his sensitiveness, to which the forms of branch and leaf are always fresh and wonderful, make his work always interesting. One has only to turn to the facile etchers of sylvan scenery, Waterloo or Swanevelt, or Van der Cabel, to realize the difference between the man who feels what he cannot perfectly master and the man who has perfect mastery of a facile formula."

## V

Comparison of Ruysdael with the greatest of all landscape etchers, Rembrandt, is of course inevitable,

and is none the less interesting and suggestive because the conclusion, to the former's disadvantage, can be foreseen from the first.

"They (Ruysdael's etchings) are remarkable no less for their grasp of masses of light and shade than for truth of line," writes Mr. Hind; "but let the student weigh his appreciation by comparing Ruysdael's *Landscape with Three Large Oaks*, of 1649, . . . which is the very best of his work, with any landscape etching by Rembrandt between 1640 and 1645. The enormous strength and balance of the latter comes out with renewed brilliance in the comparison."<sup>1</sup>

This is quite true, though we should not agree to calling *The Three Oaks* the very best of Ruysdael's work; but it should be remembered at the same time that strength and balance were by no means the qualities at which Ruysdael primarily aimed. What he sought, above all, was a truth and fidelity to nature — to the externals of nature — far more detailed and intimate than we find in Rembrandt, and of an entirely different order. Rembrandt, an intellectual giant, stood, we may say, boldly and unabashed on an equal level with nature, meeting her freely face to face — even dominating her and subjecting her to the yoke of his creative intelligence. For Ruysdael, on the contrary, shy and sensitive, nature was a miracle, a mistress, a mystery, and he brought to the study of her slightest manifestation, a mood of solemn awe, almost of religious worship and elevation.

"So to know nature that we feel one with her," writes

<sup>1</sup> *A Short History of Engraving and Etching*. By A. M. Hind. Of the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1908.

Wilhelm Bode, "are irresistibly drawn to her, although this power appears so mighty that it almost crushes us to feel the soul of nature, was granted to few artists, as Hercules Seghers, and above all to Rembrandt. They describe to us her imposing powers and grandeur, Jacob Ruysdael the sublime equanimity with which she compels our submission and quiet admiration."

Dr. Bode is writing primarily of Ruysdael's paintings, but what he says applies with equal truth, in their degree, to his etchings as well. Certainly nobody else — not even Rembrandt — has given the world so profound an impression of the mystery, the aloofness, the remote inner life of nature, in certain aspects, as we get from these few plates which, with all their imperfections, must ever remain among the most interesting productions of the etcher's art.

## THE ROAD TO ROME

### I

**M**AURICE BARRES has a delightful passage in one of his essays, where he pictures the youthful Claude setting forth upon the road that led from his native Lorraine, to the Eternal City. Callot, too, took the road to Rome from the same province; and throughout the seventeenth century, young men, eager to lead the life of art, sought that city which, in addition to its other and older glories, had become the art centre of Italy. To be sure, the Italian painting of the period offered but a faint reflection of its former splendour. The artists who followed Raphael, and who had already reduced to a formula his methods and those of Michelangelo, were Eclectics and Academicians — the pale epigoni of the past. Still, for better or worse, they were the sole heritors of a great tradition, and it was inevitable that those who had come, however little, under the spell of the Latin spirit, as expressed in painting, should seek there the stream of inspiration at its source.

Also, more than any other European capital, Rome had a great, cultured, art-loving public. If it had itself ceased to be creative in the full sense, it had, at least, carried refinement of taste to the last degree. It was the

home of the princely and ecclesiastic amateur, as well as of the artist, and the former was most munificent in his patronage of the latter. If one could paint pictures to please the Romans, he could sell them, too, and recognition there meant, naturally, recognition in every lesser capital of Europe. No wonder, therefore, that the young provincial was tempted to come and try his fortune in Rome; and he came in great numbers, from every corner of western Europe — even from those remote regions of the Low Countries, protected by dykes from the hostile onslaughts of the North Sea, which had hardly been heard of till towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the boorish Dutch burghers and uncouth fisher-folk surprised the world by their desperate resistance to the imperial power of Spain.

Dutch etchers, as well as painters, began taking the road to Rome from the very beginning of the great period of Dutch art. Indeed the Dutch etchers of the seventeenth century may be roughly divided into two classes: those who stayed at home and worked, in the main, from native materials, in a national or traditional manner, and those other — a smaller, but by no means inconsiderable group — who, going to Italy, remained there a longer or shorter period, and, affected to a greater or lesser degree by the foreign influences with which they came in contact, helped to establish a second, or Italianate, tradition in the Dutch landscape etching of the period.

In regard to some of the earlier men, it is at times difficult to say whether they themselves actually visited Italy, or whether they were simply influenced by the work of others who had been there and returned with a new message to their fellow-countrymen. This, as we

have seen, is the case of Jan van de Velde.<sup>1</sup> It is also the case with the artist who may, perhaps, be called the pioneer of Dutch landscape etching, and who was certainly one of the most important predecessors of Rembrandt — Hercules Seghers.

Seghers, who was born about 1590, and died in 1645, presents a solitary, enigmatic personality, of whom little is known. A mystery hangs over the man, and extends to his landscape material as well. Much of this, rugged and mountainous, bears no relation to the level plains of the Low Countries. Indeed, it is difficult to identify it at all, geographically. Yet somehow it seems too closely observed, too faithfully and directly rendered, to be wholly fantastic.

“If then,” asks Mr. Binyon in his “Dutch Etchers of the Seventeenth Century,” “it was actual scenery that Seghers etched, where is that scenery to be found? It is certainly not the Alps, and though one or two plates suggest the Tyrol, the landscape is most like in character to the Karst district on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. One of the etchings might almost stand for the rock-surrounded plain of Cettinje, in Montenegro, though to infer that Seghers travelled to so remote a country would be a wild conjecture.”

Yet not so wild, perhaps, after all. The capital of Montenegro is only a few miles inland, up the Black Mountain, from the Bocche di Cattaro; and, as Cattaro and Ragusa (whence is derived the word “argosy”) were great commercial ports in the sixteenth century, it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that a citizen of a commercial country, like Holland, should

<sup>1</sup> “The Van de Veldes.” By William Aspenwall Bradley. *The Print-Collector’s Quarterly*, February, 1917, p. 70.

have visited one or the other, or both, and explored the "Hinterland." Or he might even have suffered shipwreck on the rocky Dalmatian or Albanian coast, in which case his experience would merely have paralleled that of Allardt van Everdingen, cast away on the coast of Norway.

Seghers produced a large number of plates, many of them in color; but he apparently took few impressions, for his prints are rare and, for the most part, safely stored away in the great museums of Europe. The whole body of his work, however, has been admirably reproduced by the Graphische Gesellschaft, so that the student in this country is able to study, practically as well as in the original, the etchings of this remarkable artist.

When, at Seghers' death, his effects were sold, Rembrandt bought one of his plates, *Tobias and the Angel*, which he reworked, changing the subject to a *Flight into Egypt*. This plate of Seghers was directly imitated from a very popular painting of the same subject by Adam Elsheimer, which now hangs in the National Gallery, London. It seems quite likely, therefore, that, at one time, Seghers may have been a member of that cosmopolitan circle which gathered around Elsheimer, painter and etcher of Frankfort, and which is known to have included a number of Dutch artists, some of whom we shall have occasion to mention later.

Elsheimer himself is one of the most interesting and significant figures in the history of modern art.

"It is a remarkable spectacle," writes Vosmaer, the Dutch biographer of Rembrandt, "to see this German drawn towards the inevitable Rome, like a moth to the candle, and yet not burning his wing. He seems to have been a man of immovable originality, sometimes of a



HERCULES SEGHERS. ROCKY LANDSCAPE WITH A RIVER AND A CARRIAGE ROAD

Size of the original etching,  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Rijks-Museum, Amsterdam



HERCULES SEGHERS. TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Rijks-Museum, Amsterdam



REMBRANDT. FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Size of the original etching,  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

melancholy humor, always serious, pensive of spirit, and secluded within himself. . . . He married, had children, a number of pupils, many friends, complete success, his works brought large sums — and all this could not satisfy him. What did this seeker aspire after? Possibly after a new way of painting, of which he fore-saw the wonder. Having at first painted large pictures, 'he became,' says Sandrart, who knew him, 'the first to invent the genre of small scenes, landscapes, and other curiosities.'"

One day, says the same contemporary, he exhibited at Rome a small picture painted on copper. It represented an angel guiding the young Tobias across a little stream while Tobias' dog jumps from stone to stone. The rising sun shines full into the faces of the figures, and the whole picture was so simple, so natural, so spontaneous in its action and its expression, besides being set in a landscape so charming and so gracious, that everybody in Rome was full of praise for this "new manner of painting of Adam of Francfort."

What was this manner? Sandrart goes on to describe it as "unctuous, full of marrow, brilliant, and masterly. It knows well how to manage the colors, and to keep together the great masses, how to round the objects, and to preserve the half tints. This is what gives roundness and force, especially as the colors are not blue, lustreless, and pale, but fiery, hot, and true to life."

But there was more than this technical novelty to account for the attraction that Elsheimer had for his contemporaries. His "new manner," as exemplified in the little picture of *Tobias and the Angel*, consisted also in this, says Vosmaer, "that it dared to cast loose from tradition, from the convention of the grand style,



HENDRIK GOUDT (AFTER ADAM ELSHEIMER). *TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL*

Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

from the plasticity of design borrowed from sculpture, from the conventional setting, the conventional ideal, and the conventional costume."

Hitherto, in representing Biblical or mythological scenes, the artist had felt constrained to create ideal types, an ideal atmosphere. Elsheimer took his figures from real life, placed them in a familiar Italian landscape, and thus enhanced the intimate charm, the human appeal, of the sacred or profane episode. This method also became that of Rembrandt, who unquestionably owed much to Elsheimer in this, as in other respects, notably the novel and daring use of subtly contrived contrasts of light and shade. There also Elsheimer was the pioneer, though it was Rembrandt who perfected the method, and carried it to its highest pitch as the expression of a mood.

Rembrandt never met the German master, though his master, Pieter Lastman, had studied with him in Rome, but that Rubens knew him and valued his work, is a matter of record. From a letter written by the great Flemish painter to Pieter van Veen, in June, 1622, we even learn something of Elsheimer's technical methods as an etcher.

"I have heard," he says, "that you have found the secret of engraving on copper on a white ground, as Elsheimer used to do. To bite the plate with acid, he covered the copper with a white paste. He then drew with the point down to the metal, which is of a reddish color, and it looked as if he were drawing with red crayon on white paper. I cannot remember the composition of the white paste, though he communicated it to me."

There has been considerable controversy as to whether Elsheimer's influence, as an etcher, was as great as his



ADAM ELSHEIMER. NYMPH WITH A TAMBOURINE

Of the same size as the original etching

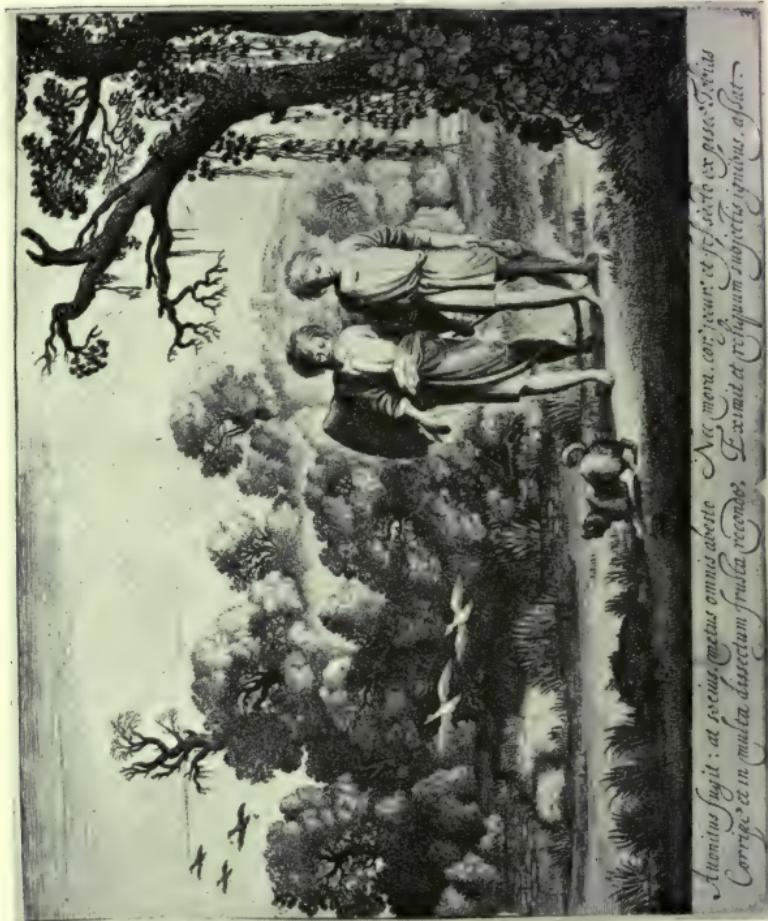
In the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

influence as a painter, Dr. Bode supporting the affirmative, Mr. Binyon the negative. Certainly the few plates that have come down to us bearing his name, are not of remarkable quality, though the small forest scenes, with satyrs and nymphs, have charm, and are strikingly suggestive and anticipatory of Claude. There may, however, be others that Time will bring to light, and that will give a very different idea at once of his ability and his significance as an etcher. One such discovery was, indeed, made only a few years ago by the collector, the late M. Scheikévitch,<sup>1</sup> who, buying, one day, a bundle of prints in a little shop on the *quais* of the Seine, found among them a signed proof of an unknown etching by Elsheimer.

It was a night scene, the subject, a battery of three guns, placed in a forest, being curiously reminiscent of Dürer's single landscape etching, *The Cannon*. The guns had just been discharged, and the belching flames cast a strong glare upon a group of men standing to one side, while the dawn, just beginning to break, gave that odd effect of double lighting, of which Elsheimer was so fond.

But the curious thing about this plate, as M. Scheikévitch discovered shortly afterwards, is its resemblance to one of Jan van de Velde's, dealing with the same subject, in the same manner. Indeed, this resemblance is so close as to make it certain, beyond a doubt, that *Ignis*, in van de Velde's series of "The Elements," is a direct copy from Elsheimer, though, like the others in the same series, it bears the initials "W. B.," standing for Willem Buytewech, an artist who supplied many

<sup>1</sup> S. Sheikévitch: "Adam Elzheimer; ses gravures originales; une eau-forte inédite." Illus. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Series 3, Vol. 25, pp. 401-12. Paris, 1901.



*Amonius fugit: at fructus omnis abebat. Nec mero, coriaceum, & cibis, & cetero ex parte. Tobi  
Corrigere in multa discretum fructu ricondit: Eximam et rupium subiectis ignitis, apert.*

JAN VAN DE VELDE (AFTER MOSES VAN UYTENBROECK). TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL

Size of the original etching, 6 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 8 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

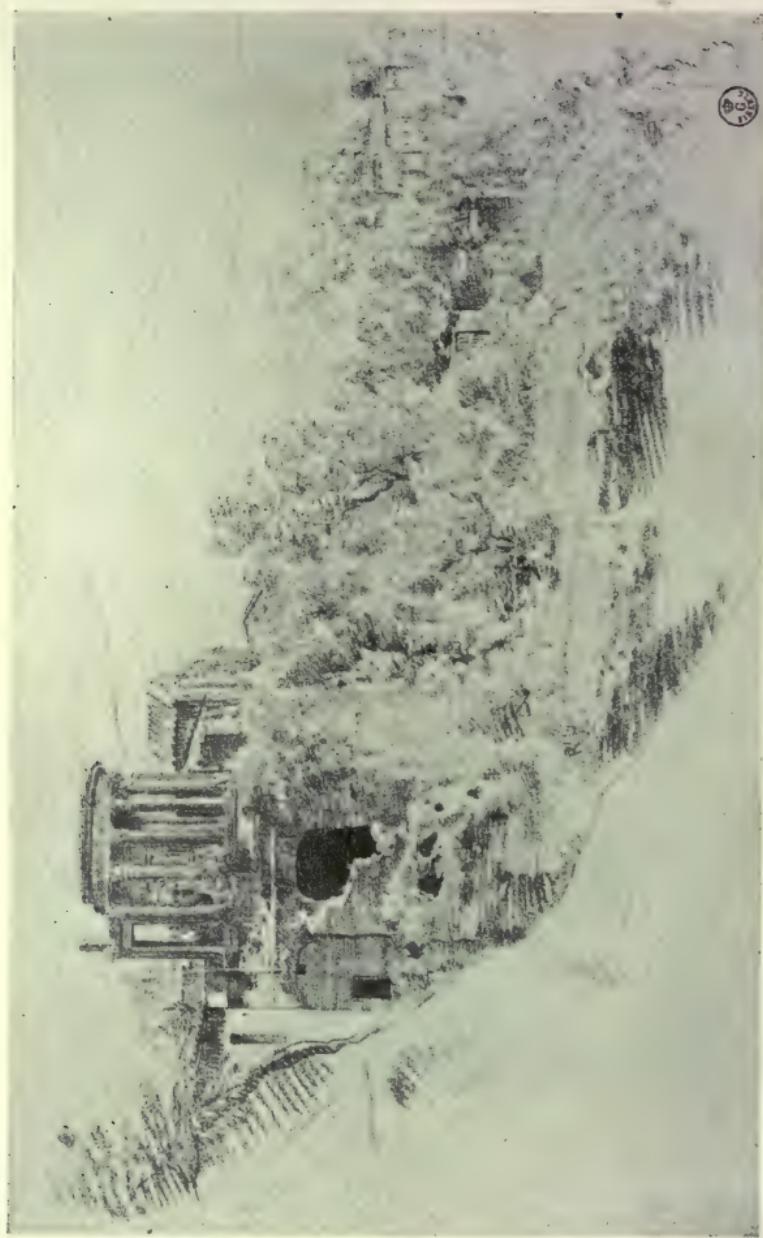
designs for contemporary etchers, and even made some plates himself.

It is hard to explain the motives of such a theft. M. Scheikevitch, writing in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, argues very plausibly, that a well-known name like Buitewech would be much more effective in selling the prints than that of an artist like Elsheimer, who, however honored by the artists themselves, had not as yet acquired a reputation among the print-buyers of the Low Countries. He offers also the interesting suggestion that van de Velde's plate, *The Sorceress*, in the same style, was similarly "lifted" from Elsheimer, and identifies it tentatively with a plate called *Maga*, which, from contemporary accounts, Elsheimer is known to have executed, but of which no impression is now known to exist.

Moses van Uijtenbroeck, another artist who made designs for Jan van de Velde to execute, was also strongly influenced by Elsheimer. One whole series of plates drawn by him, and etched by van de Velde, is devoted to scenes from the life of Tobias — a favorite subject for all Elsheimer's friends and followers, and constituting, as it were, a sign manual of the school he established. Elsheimer's original picture, which started the whole movement, was, moreover, engraved by that picturesque artist and amateur, Hendrik Goudt, of Utrecht, Count Palatine, the artist's principal friend, patron, and protector at Rome.

## II

In spite of the powerful stimulus which he gave both to landscape painting and landscape etching in the Low Countries, Elsheimer himself was scarcely a land-



CORNELIS POELENBERG. VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF VESTA AND GROTTO OF NEPTUNE, AT TIVOLI

Size of the original drawing,  $6\frac{3}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Uffizi, Florence

scape artist in the stricter sense. In his work, as in that of most of his immediate followers, the landscape interest, great as this is, remains subordinate to that of the figures. It is the story, the incident, the episode, that counts. But, at the same time, the landscape setting is given an importance, a prominence, that it had not had before. As has been said, this landscape, instead of being invented by the artist, was drawn directly from actual observation, and so had a fresh and seductive air of truth and reality. At the same time, his predilection for Italian scenes, which he peopled with the stock figures of classical mythology, and bathed with the tender tones of that twilight illumination of which he had discovered the secret, created a special taste for the sentimental and picturesque among his contemporaries, and was the chief factor in the development of that Italianized school of Dutch landscape which grew up in the seventeenth century, alongside the native school, and which even claimed, in part at least, many men who had never been in Italy — like, as we have seen, Adriaen van de Velde.

This "Arcadian school," as Dr. Wilhelm Bode calls it, had its immediate beginnings in the work of Cornelis Poelenberg, a painter of Utrecht, who was a pupil of Bloemaert, before he became a follower of Elsheimer, and who, although he etched little himself, is connected with the etching school of the period through the reproduction of some of his pictures by his friend, Jan Gerritz Bronchorst. Poelenberg was enjoying great popularity in Rome when Claude arrived there in 1627, and no doubt had his share in forming the style of that artist, in whom the school achieved its fullest and finest expression.



CLAUDE GELLÉE. *LE BOUVIER*

Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Most landscape art, as we know it to-day, has nature as its subject. For Claude, however, its subject, paradoxical as the statement may seem, its subject was man. This does not mean that the first place is held in his pictures by the human figures they contain. On the contrary, such figures are of far less relative importance than they are in the pictures of his master, Elsheimer — become, indeed, mere staffage designed to fill the landscape, and complete it. Nor does it mean that he was any less attentive to the phenomena of the external world than another artist, such as Ruysdael or Rembrandt, even; for Claude carried very much farther Elsheimer's budding interest in the real world about him, and we know from the *Liber Veritatis* how closely and systematically he studied and sought to capture the least variations of light on the broad, flat spread of the Roman Campagna. But these studies were, for Claude, after all, but a means to an end, this end being the representation of nature, not exactly as he saw it, with his eyes, but as he loved to recreate and contemplate it in an ideal world of his imagining.

Poets at all times have dreamed of a Golden Age, and have sought to realize it in their art by means of tangible signs and symbols. For Claude, who was such a poet, as painter and etcher, this Golden Age of man was the classical age of the past, of which some material evidences still remained to aid the dreamer in his work of reconstruction — far more, indeed, than at the present day. Then there was classical literature also — the "Eclogues" of Virgil and the "Idyls" of Theocritus — which itself breathed a spirit of serenity, of tranquillity, of elevation, of remoteness from the mere vulgar concerns of common life. Claude's noble and uplifted art is as



CLAUDE GELLÉE. DANCE BY THE WATERSIDE

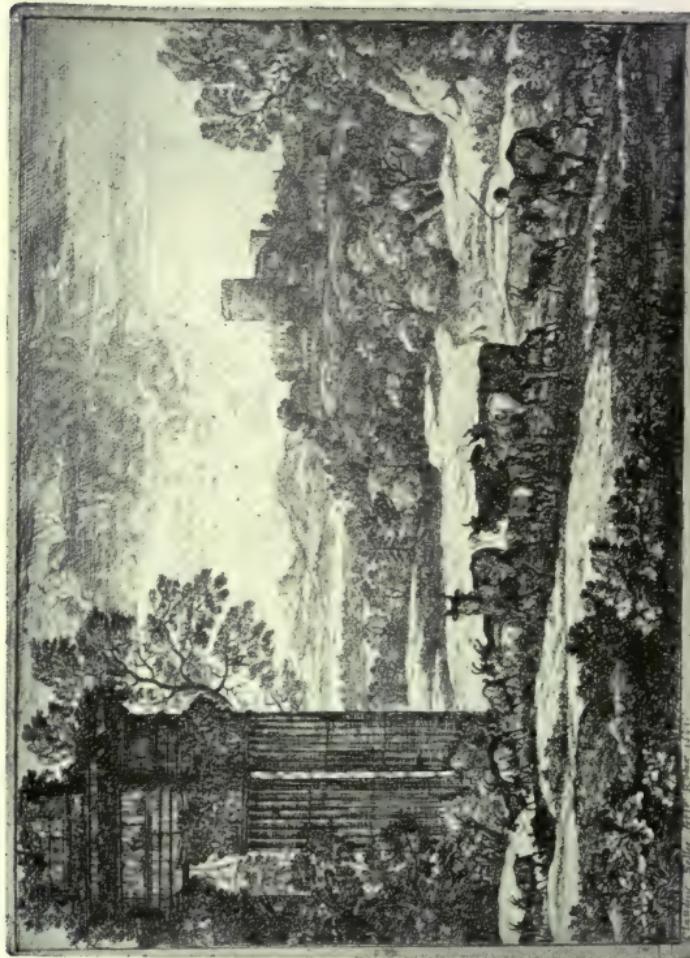
Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

nearly as possible the pictorial equivalent of this classic literature; and for us, even if it misses, through the deliberate care with which it is composed, something of the freshness and spontaneity which we are accustomed to require of the greatest landscape art, it still has power to express, as no other can, certain moods of man's more subtly refined and intellectualized emotional experience — his dreams, and his desires for the ideal.

If Claude's appeal is still felt to-day, in spite of the great change that has come over our ideas of landscape art, in general, one can realize how powerful this appeal must have been to a generation thoroughly prepared to accept his ideas and his sentiments. The influence of Elsheimer, on its more immediate and superficial side, which continued to be felt long after his death, was thus powerfully reinforced by this young apostle of the serene classic spirit, whose fame, quickly acquired, spread from Rome all over the world, tempting more and more young men to take the road to the world's capital.

Some, already there, who had formed part of Elsheimer's circle, came, in turn, under his spell, like Pieter de Laer, who made at least one landscape etching in the style of the master. Bartolomeus Breenbergh, who arrived in Rome in 1620, the year of Elsheimer's death, and left in 1627, the year of Claude's arrival, returned there later, and published, in 1640, a set of small prints etched with an exceedingly fine needle. Berchem, one of the best known Dutch etchers of the seventeenth century, who had studied with Pieter de Laer, and who spent most of his life making studies of the peasants of the Roman Campagna, came later, and he was followed by his pupil, the *animalier*, Karel du Jardin. Herman van Swanenvelt was perhaps the most prolific producer



CLAUDE GELLÉE. THE HERD IN THE STORM

Size of the original etching,  $6\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

of the entire group in the field of etching. But he was far inferior to his fellow-countryman, Jan Both, in whom the "Arcadian school" found a representative second only to Claude himself.

It is significant that Both, like Goudt, like Poelenberg — like Breenbergh, too, according to some accounts — was born in Utrecht. For, just as, in the gradual development of Dutch art, with its dual strain or tendencies, Haarlem became the centre of the more radical, native school, composed of men like Goyen, Molyn, the van de Veldes; so, in the same way, this other city, keeping closer contact with the older culture and civilization to the south and east, gathered to itself the persisting classical, conservative elements, and became the headquarters of the Italianate art and influences. Both, born in 1620, could hardly have come into any very close personal relations with Goudt, who died in 1630. But he studied under Abraham Bloemaert, who had also taught Poelenberg, and who himself had studied in Paris. So it was natural that, when sufficiently advanced in his studies, he should have looked abroad for further instruction, and set forth in due course for France and Italy.

He travelled with his brother, Andries, a year older, who had also studied under Bloemaert. The brothers seem to have had a remarkable affection for each other, and they collaborated in the first pictures they painted on Italian soil. In these pictures the landscape was executed by Jan, who immediately came under the spell of Claude, at Rome, the figures being introduced by Andries, who had studied the works of Bamboccio.

The talent of the brothers, working together in this way, in perfect harmony and unison, attracted instant



JAN BOTH. LANDSCAPE WITH AN OX-CART

Size of the original etching,  $10 \times 7\frac{5}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

attention, and they won both fame and fortune. Indirectly, no doubt, their success was the immediate cause of the fate which shortly overtook them, and put a sad end to this fraternal partnership. For, without it, they would scarcely have left Rome to visit Venice, where, their means permitting them to indulge in the festivities of that gay capital, as Guardi and Canaletto showed it to us, little changed, no doubt, a century or so later, Andries fell one night from their gondola, when returning from an entertainment, and was drowned in the canal. The account of the incident is meagre in its details, and permits us merely to guess at the condition of the young burgher artist, at the time.

Jan did not remain long in Italy after his brother's death, but returned to Utrecht, where he is said to have endeavored to supply his artistic loss by having Poelenberg paint the figures in his landscapes.

Both Jan and Andries etched. The latter produced some thirteen plates, all figure studies — including the items enumerated in Weigel's supplement to Bartsch — while Jan executed fifteen, ten of them being landscapes with figures. The remaining five are devoted to the illustration of "The Five Senses of Man," one of those *suites* to which, as we have seen in the case of Jan van de Velde, the Dutch taste was so strongly attracted at that time. But it is by his landscape etchings, so few in number, yet so beautiful in quality, that Jan Both will be remembered.

"From Claude," writes Mr. Binyon, "Both had learned how to produce, with a nice management of the acid, an exquisite softness in his distances. The atmosphere is limpid and bathed in sunshine, and the foregrounds are suggested with that light touch



JAN BOTH. THE BOAT-JOURNEY

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

and selection of detail which are first requisites in an etching."

It is, however, as difficult for the student to judge of Both in the impressions ordinarily seen of his work, as it is of Ruysdael, and for the same reason. The publisher, to complete what the artist had, with sure tact, intentionally left unfinished, defaced the plates, in their second state, by ruling lines across the sky and so destroying a large share of their delightful atmospheric quality and suggestion. But, even with this drawback, Both's prints are most agreeable to contemplate, and combine, to a degree unusual in etching, carefully planned pictorial qualities with perfect freedom and taste in execution.

With Both, as has already been said, we reach the culmination of this alien and exotic school of Dutch etching, which, taking its inspiration from foreign artists and from the Italian soil, long flourished on home ground. There it came, in the course of time, to supplant, to a greater or lesser degree, the purely native school, with its often rude but always racy note, infecting even such sound local etchers as Adriaen van de Velde and Antoni Waterloo. In the latter it is interesting to note the two currents running along, side by side, in separate series — those in which he, too, attempts the interpretation of Biblical and mythological scenes in an idyllic landscape, and those, far more interesting and successful, in which he gives us, without the least subterfuge or affectation, his quiet little glimpses of the pleasant Dutch countryside. But Waterloo, who remained up to the early years of the last century the representative Dutch landscape etcher of his age, still remains too considerable a figure to be presented in this summary way at the end of an article on a school



JAN BOTH. STONE BRIDGE (PONTE MOLLE, NEAR ROME)

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{5}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

with which he had only a casual connection. He deserves fuller, more individual treatment, and we shall hope, at some future time, to make him the subject of another article, dealing exclusively with his own pleasant and restful, if somewhat shallow and superficial, art.

## ZEEMAN AND BACKHUYSEN

### I

**R**EYNIER NOOMS, or Zeeman, as he was called by his contemporaries, because of his fondness for marine subjects, has a double interest and significance for us to-day. In the first place, he was one of the most accomplished etchers of his time in Holland — easily the first among those who made a specialty of ships and shipping. In the second, after two hundred years, he became the master of Charles Meryon, who attached the highest importance to his work, studied and copied it with the closest attention, and, finally, dedicated to him his own series of “Eaux-Fortes sur Paris.” The dedication took the form of a poem, which Meryon also etched on copper and printed as a separate sheet. In it his admiration and almost, it would seem, his personal affection, for the Dutch etcher finds expression, and he makes graceful acknowledgement of his indebtedness in the following lines:—

“Of this first work and new,  
Where I have Paris shown —  
A ship adorns her banner —  
And tried to make my own  
My master’s simple manner,  
Accept the homage due,”

ending with the fervent apostrophe and prayer: —



REYNTER ZEEMAN. SKATING SCENE

Size of the original etching, 5 × 9 inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

"My master and man of the sea,  
Reynier, thou whom I love  
Like another part of me,  
May I see thee soon above!"<sup>1</sup>

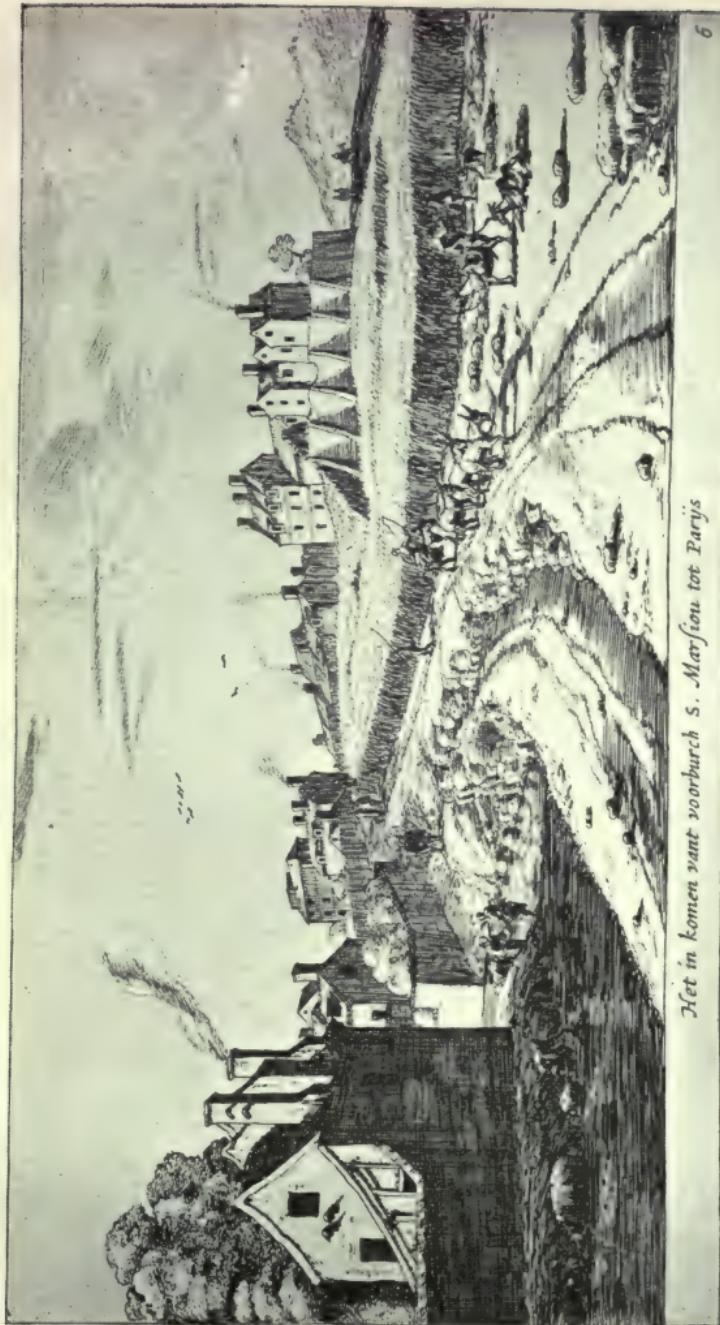
A curious thing about this dedicatory poem is that there is in it no reference to Zeeman as an architectural etcher, though it was one of his plates in a series of Paris views — *Le Pavillon de Mademoiselle et une Partie du Louvre* — that originally attracted Meryon — that even crystallized his vague notion of executing a similar series of his own on the same subject, as he himself states in the course of the notes, entitled "Mes Observations. . . , " which he jotted down on the margins of Burty's catalogue of his etchings.

"This first plate," he writes, "has had a notable influence upon me. I came upon it one day, while going through a box of etchings at Vignères', and it immediately arrested my attention, as much because of the interest of the things represented, as of the brilliance of its execution, the life that lends gayety to the whole scene. I seized upon it at once with the intention of reproducing it for my own greater enjoyment; and from that very moment I conceived the project that I was then vaguely meditating, of undertaking a series of views of Paris, of my own selection, of which, in my mind, *La Pompe N.D.* was to be the first."

Meryon's admiration for Zeeman is further amplified and justified in the continuation of the above: —

"As I have already had occasion to say in several circumstances, these copies after Zeeman, a master aquafortist to whom I attach the highest importance, have

<sup>1</sup> "Charles Meryon, Poet." By William Aspenwall Bradley. *The Print-Collector's Quarterly*, October, 1913, pp. 336-64.



*Het in kommen vant vorburch S. Marçou tot Parys*

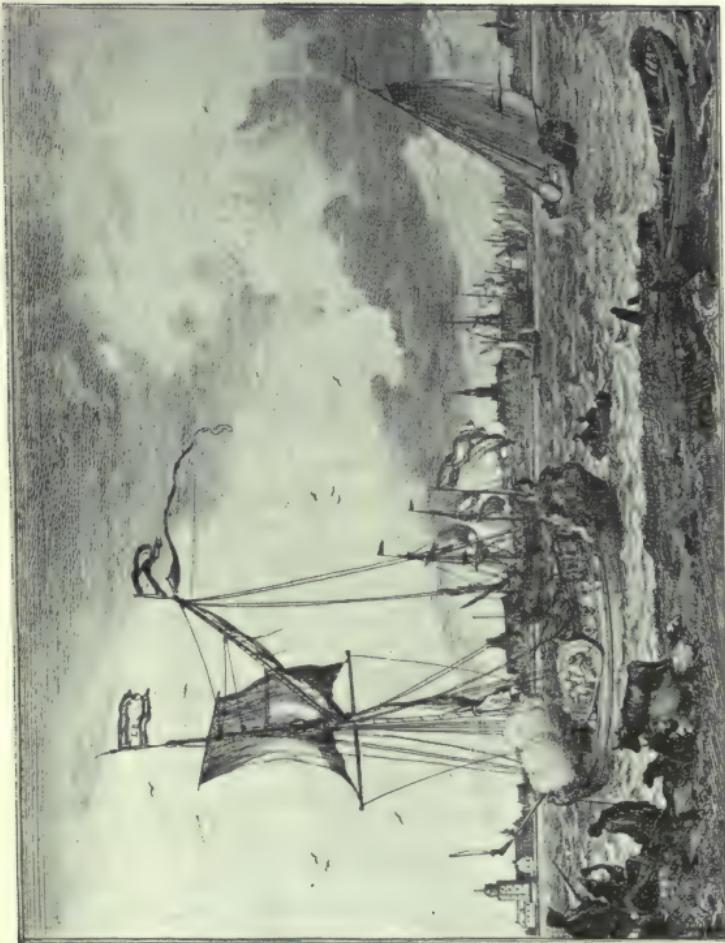
REYNIER ZEEMAN. ENTRANCE TO THE FAUBOURG ST. MARCEAU, PARIS

Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

not . . . anywhere the naïveté, the spirit, the freshness, which distinguish the originals. At that time I did not know this artist's manner of etching, to which attentive examination of his works initiated me shortly afterwards. I made these four views of Paris, as well as the little marines . . . above all with the aim of acquiring the knowledge I needed of the methods of the art. It was thus that, in the water-mill of Saint Denis [*Un Moulin à eau près de Saint-Denis*] I proposed to push the action of the acid as far as possible: whence comes the excessive vigor, the heaviness, of this plate."

The other plates by Zeeman mentioned above were *Entrée du Faubourg Saint-Marceau, à Paris*, and *La Rivière de Seine et l'Angle du Mail, à Paris*, in the same set as the two others, while the little marines were *Jan van Vyl's Galiot, at Rotterdam*; *Haarlem Boats at Amsterdam*; *Zuyderzee Fishermen*, and *Passengers from Calais to Flushing*. Meryon's copies are, of course, reversed from Zeeman's originals, which, despite the French artist's modest disclaimer, they not infrequently surpass in strength, completeness, and solidity of construction. A mastery of the medium is already beginning to manifest itself, to which the Dutch etcher could never attain. Yet Zeeman himself was a skillful etcher, worthy of all the praise Meryon bestowed upon him. Without a trace of the genius of Rembrandt, who was considerably his elder, he has, nevertheless, in his best work, a truth of observation and rendering, coupled with a charm and purity of linear style, that puts him in the very front rank of craftsmen on copper.



LUDOLF BACKHUYSEN. MARINE, WITH A CITY IN THE BACKGROUND

Size of the original etching,  $7 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

## II

Of Zeeman, the man, virtually nothing is known — less, even, than of Ruysdael. The very place of his birth is a mystery, but there seems no particular reason to doubt that he was born in Holland, and the date is generally placed about 1623. The inscription on the first of a series of marine views (B. 23–38) proves that he was living in Amsterdam in 1656, and presumably he worked there the greater part of his life, judging by the number of the views of that city and its shipping which he executed. Heinecken reports that he was at first a simple sailor, but that his genius led him to desert that calling and apply himself to painting. In this respect, of course, his career was, later, closely paralleled by that of Meryon, his pupil, who resigned his commission as a lieutenant in the French navy, to devote himself to the practice of his art. According to the same authority, Zeeman once spent a long time in Berlin. Certainly the Paris views (B. 55–62) make it clear that he visited France, while a second series of marines (B. 107–118), which carry the address of a London publisher, Tooker, seem to indicate that he may have visited England as well; though, as a matter of fact, there is nothing absolutely conclusive in the addresses of publishers at that period, since the copper plates were often bought and passed on from publisher to publisher, after they had once left the hands of the artist.

As an etcher, Zeeman was most prolific, and it has been difficult to determine the exact number of his plates. Bartsch enumerates 154, but Dutuit raises this to 179, including those described in the Rigal catalogue and in Weigel's supplement to Bartsch, as well as two that had



REYNIER ZEEMAN. MARINE PIECE

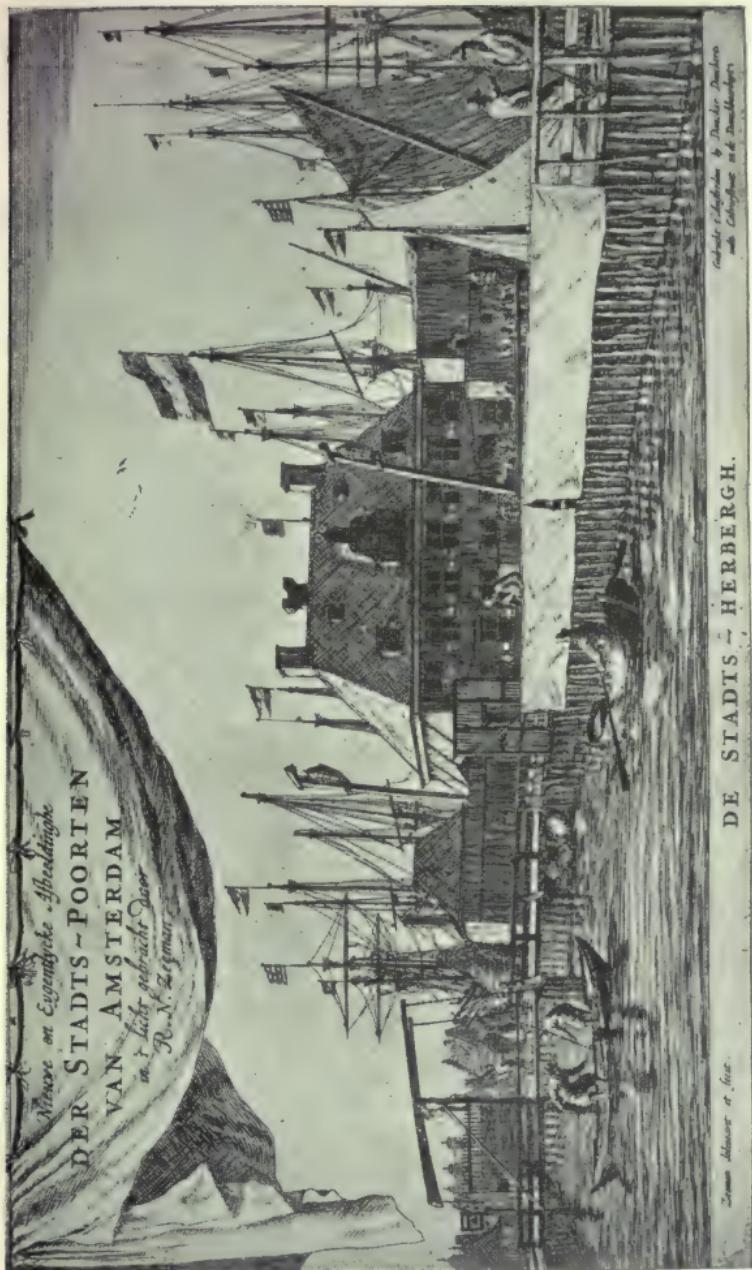
Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{5}{8} \times 11\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

not been attributed to Zeeman by any previous writer. These large portraits of the Dutch admirals, Ruyter and van Galen, were engraved by Mouzyn; but both contain, in the lower portion of the plate, the same little representation of a naval battle, etched by Zeeman. It will be recalled, in this connection, that Willem van de Velde the Elder was also in the habit of supplying marine views to be similarly used as pendants to the portrait engravings of his contemporaries; though, unlike Zeeman, he did not etch or engrave these himself.

The above portraits seem originally to have formed part of a series of four, of which the two others represented Martin Harpertsz Tromp, killed in a battle with the English, and Cornelius Tromp, his son. The last was the only one of the quartette who did not die a violent death. Zeeman also collaborated with Mouzyn on an *Apotheosis of Admiral Harpertsz Tromp*, in which the naval hero is represented as being borne on a fiery chariot to the gates of Eternity, by Renown and Death. Zeeman's share is, however, here also limited to the view, in the lower part of the plate, of the naval battle of August 7, 1653, near Scheveningen, in which Tromp lost his life.

Naval battles, indeed, form no inconsiderable element in Zeeman's work, as they did in that of both the Willem van de Veldes — not unnaturally, when one considers how often the little Republic was at war with her mighty rivals, France and England, in the second half of the seventeenth century, just at the time when Dutch art, including etching, was at its height. Thus three small plates, of the utmost rarity — they are cited in the Marcus Catalogue, Amsterdam, 1770, but neither Bartsch nor Dutuit had ever seen them — represent



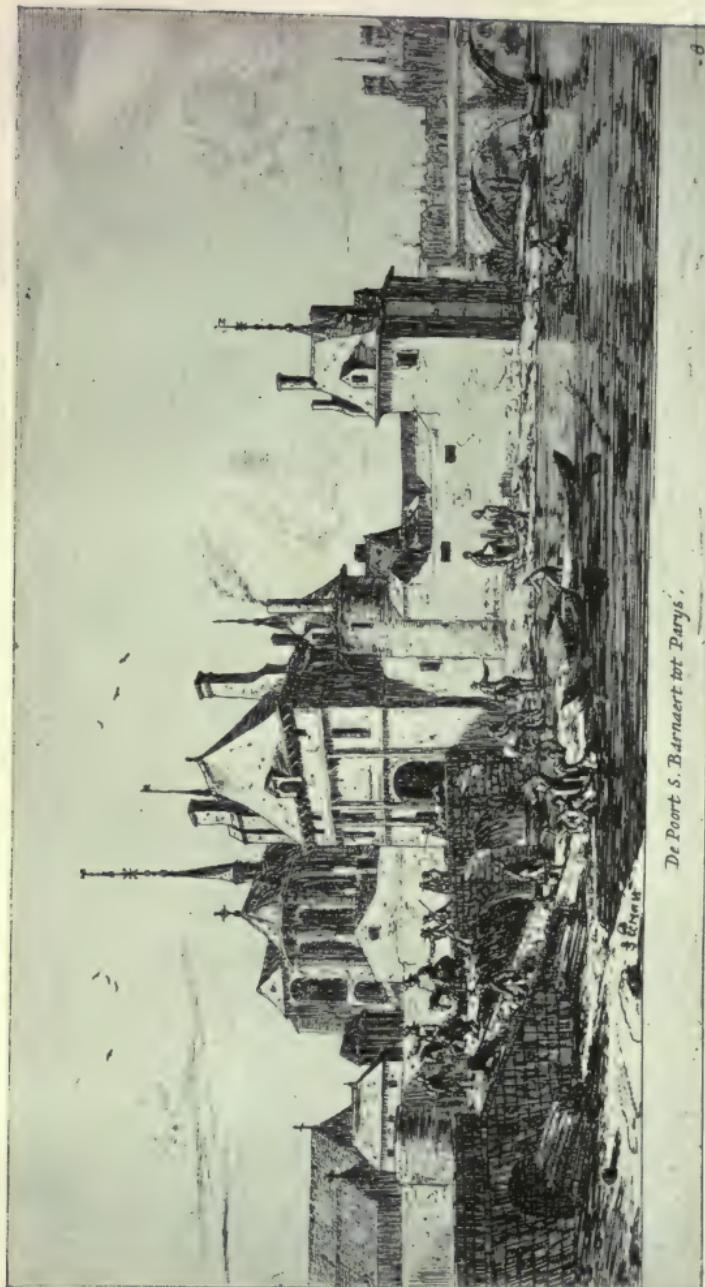
DE STADTS-HERBERGH.

REYNIER ZEEMAN. DE STADTS-HERBERGH  
Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

“The Naval Battles, Forever Memorable, of the Admirals de Ruyter, Tromp, and Bankert, June 7 and 14 and August 21, 1673, against the Anglo-French Fleet.” One whole series (B. 99–106) is devoted entirely to the theme of naval warfare, though, as the title, “*Nouvelles inventions de combats Navaeles*,” inscribed on a banderolle, indicates, these plates do not represent any particular historic scenes. Doubtless the commanders could be prevailed upon, in their hours of leisure, to put their vessels through their paces to please the popular artist, who so flattered the national pride. Perhaps they were even under instructions from the Admiralty to do what they could to facilitate his efforts, as in the case of the van de Veldes. Like them, Zeeman may possibly have held some official position in the pay of that department, for the fuller enlightenment of his fellow-countrymen as to what was going on in the fleet and on the high seas. One can imagine how stimulating to the tax-payer might prove such a print as the one (B. 167) showing a naval battle at the very critical moment of the engagement. In the foreground, towards the left, floats the dismantled hulk of a ship, beyond which five other ships are shown enveloped in smoke. One is discharging its broadside. Probably this plate also belonged to a series of which the others are missing.

On the whole, however, Zeeman finds his distinctive field in the more peaceful employments of the Dutch sailors of his time. Just as the two van de Veldes, father and son, unfold for us a great panorama of Holland’s naval glory in the seventeenth century, so Zeeman delights to give a detailed picture of her maritime supremacy in other ways. Although he himself has composed several cantos in the great epic of sea-warfare waged by



*De Poort s. Barnaert tot Parys.*

REYNIER ZEEMAN. OLD GATE OF ST. BERNARD, PARIS

Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

his country for the maintenance of that supremacy, and although his battle pieces have something of the magnificence of the old sea-fights, he is above all the laureate of the Dutch merchant marine, and he loves to show us the stout ships, the sturdy sailors, the sandy shore, and the well-built ports of the prosperous cities. One whole series, of eight plates, is devoted to the depiction of "The Ports of the City of Amsterdam" (B. 119-126), and here Zeeman is particularly happy in being able to combine the two motives — shipping and architecture — in the treatment of which he particularly excelled.

In this delightful series the stir and bustle of harbor life are admirably indicated, with a suggestion of that sentiment of adventure and romance, which always pervades such places. Perhaps the most attractive and successful of the plates is the one representing *De Stadts-Herbergh*, which also serves as the title-piece for the entire set. All the foreground is occupied by a canal, bordered on the right by a wooden pier with a railing. In the middle stands a large building — possibly a Customs House — above the steep roof of which rise clumps of masts with flags, rigging, and spars, across nearly the entire background. At the left there is a drawbridge of quaint construction, with glimpses of other buildings in the distance. On the canal are seen a couple of small boats, while everywhere — in the boats, on the pier, on the drawbridge — men are rowing, crabbing, walking, leaning against the railing, or standing about and talking in little groups. An air of life, active but without excitement, pervades the whole plate, and this is heightened by the bright ripple running along the water stirred by a breeze which flaps the sails, streams

out the flags gayly, and whips the ropes of the rigging, whose carefully studied lines and loops, caught up into an intricate and interesting pattern, gives quite a Whistlerian note to the composition. This plate is all the better for having but slight indication of sky and cloud — Zeeman's peculiar weakness as an etcher.

Of similar interest, though of less significance artistically, is the series, referred to above (B. 107–118), of which the title-print bears the words: *Quelque port de Meer faicts par R. N. Zeeman A. amsterdam A. 1656*, written on a signboard leaning against a barrel in the left foreground. Here, however, the port, apparently, is not that of a great city, like Amsterdam, but of some smaller coast town, where the ships lie in a roadstead dominated by high, precipitous cliffs, and the loading and unloading of the small boats is done on the low, sandy shore, below the battlements. Here again we have the air of bustling activity in the carefully worked out movements of individualized sailors and roustabouts, and in the coming and going of craft, large and small, across the face of the water, sometimes with sails hanging idly, as if in a calm, sometimes with a fair wind filling them. In one, the scene has a semi-warlike aspect. Two men-of-war have been in port, and now they are evidently about to put out to sea again. Both are firing salutes, and the smoke drifts away from the mouths of the guns, in large round clouds, while the sailors aloft unfurl the sails. On shore, a group of officers bid a fond farewell to their female companions, before embarking in the tender, in the stern of which a seated sailor blows a recall on his trumpet. A second boat, filled with men, has, meanwhile, almost reached the first ship, and a sailor stands ready in the bow to lay her alongside with



REYNIER ZEEMAN. *HEYLIGE WECHS POORT*

Size of the original etching,  $6\frac{7}{8} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

his landing-hook. It is a gay and animated little picture, with, at the same time, something mellow and meditative about it, produced in part, perhaps, by the sunset hour of departure.

A third series, entitled "Different Vessels of Amsterdam" (B. 63-98), contains, incidentally, several views of that city, including the interesting print, architecturally, of *The Block House*, which shows the canal in the foreground frozen over, and everything on runners — even a small boat, which is careering along under full sail — a novel species of improvised ice-boat. But the main interest of this series, as the title indicates, lies in the various pictures of the ships themselves, shown sometimes two on a plate. "Ships, with their ordered intricacy of rigging and their mysterious beauty, have an endless fascination for him (Zeeman)," writes Mr. Binyon, and he has here indulged to the full his delight in their representation. Everything, from the great Black Bear of the far-away Greenland service, to the humble fishing smack and the galiot, — like the one in which the van de Veldes followed the manœuvres of the Dutch fleet, — finds a place here, and the series as a whole is of infinite interest for those who share Mr. Masefield's enthusiasm for ships and shipping — find a poetic charm in everything that pertains to their past history. Zeeman is no snob or aristocrat, as his fellow etcher Backhuysen was inclined to be, and he treats all types with equal zest and sympathy. "His men-of-war move with royal stateliness," but "equally good in their way are plates like the fishing boats (B. 38) setting out at morning over the still sea, bathed in a wash of limpid air and sunshine."

This atmospheric quality is one of the great charms of



REYNIER ZEEMAN. A SEA-PORT

Size of the original etching,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Zeeman's prints, when they are seen in good impressions. The lighting effects and the shadows are always carefully observed, so that often it appears possible to tell the precise time of day indicated. The skies alone are bad. Unlike Both and Ruysdael, Zeeman did not have the tact to perceive that the white paper was able to give a far greater effect of sunlight and spaciousness than any number of criss-cross lines, and his clouds have too massive a bulk, too hard and definite a contour. It is possible, however, that these may, in part, at least, have been executed by another hand.

Mention must also be made, in this connection, of Zeeman's skill in suggesting the brittle texture of ice in the delightful scene of skaters on a frozen canal (D. 155). Here the ruled lines on the surface of the ice itself are as suited to their purpose as they are hard and unsatisfactory when transferred to the sky. The subject, of course, was an exceedingly popular one in Dutch art, and reminds us of the delightful passage describing a similar scene in Pater's "Sebastian van Storck."

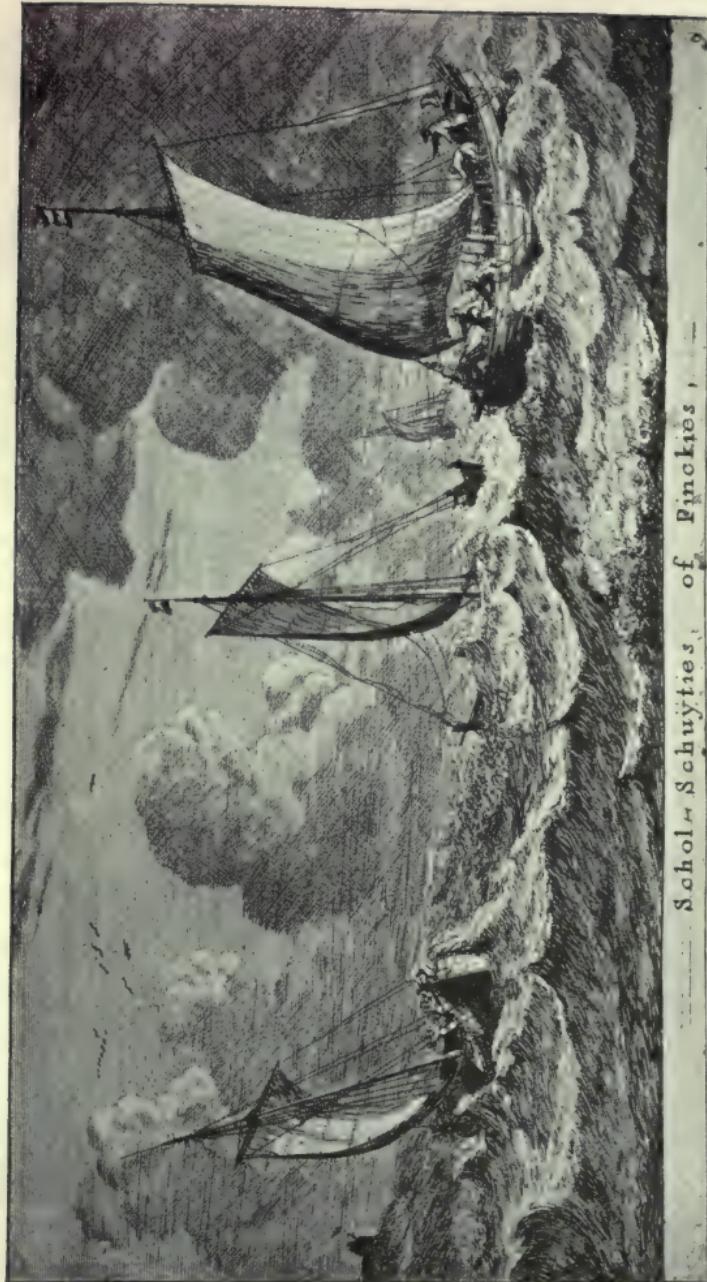
### III

Zeeman's only serious rival as an etcher of marine subjects among the Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, is Ludolf Backhuysen. Backhuysen's life is recorded with a fullness of detail that contrasts with the blank confronting us in the case of Zeeman. Born at Embden, in 1631, like Ruysdael he did not immediately become an artist, but, until he was eighteen, held a post under his father, who was secretary of the States General. The beauty of his handwriting, and his skill in keeping accounts, brought him the offer of a position

with a merchant in Amsterdam. There, at the age of nineteen, he started on his artistic career, with the instrument to the use of which he was already accustomed, namely, his pen.

“His master was nature,” says the old account. “Amsterdam offered him the spectacle of a port constantly filled with vessels: it was these vessels that he drew, and his drawings often brought him a hundred florins and even more. He was advised to paint and, taking Allardt van Everdingen as his master, he learned the secrets of art, while continuing to appropriate those of nature. To surprise these last, he was not afraid to affront the greatest dangers, and, trusting himself to frail barks, he went to study the storms amid the wildest waves, ready to engulf him. Often he was forced to return by the sailors, who refused to share his audacity. Then, as soon as he reached shore, without suffering anything to distract him for an instant, without looking at anything or speaking to anybody, he ran to his studio and threw upon the canvas the horrors that had so recently aroused his wonder and admiration.”

Backhuysen’s paintings were tremendously popular in his own time, and the burgomasters of Amsterdam ordered a big marine from him as a present for Louis XIV of France. But though becoming a painter, and a highly successful one, he did not cease, at the same time, to be a penman. He was the best calligrapher in Amsterdam, and, like the eldest van de Velde, father of Jan and Esaias, and founder of the family on Dutch soil, he gave lessons in the art. To fix its principles, he even invented a method, and this method is said to have survived him many years. Besides his penmanship, which, as his biographer complains, took much precious time



School Schuyties, or Pinkies

REYNIER ZEEMAN. PLAICE BOATS OR PINKIES

Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

from his painting, his leisure hours were devoted to poetry, and he numbered among his friends the best poets and the most celebrated *savants* of his time. He died at Amsterdam, in 1708, at the advanced age of seventy-eight.

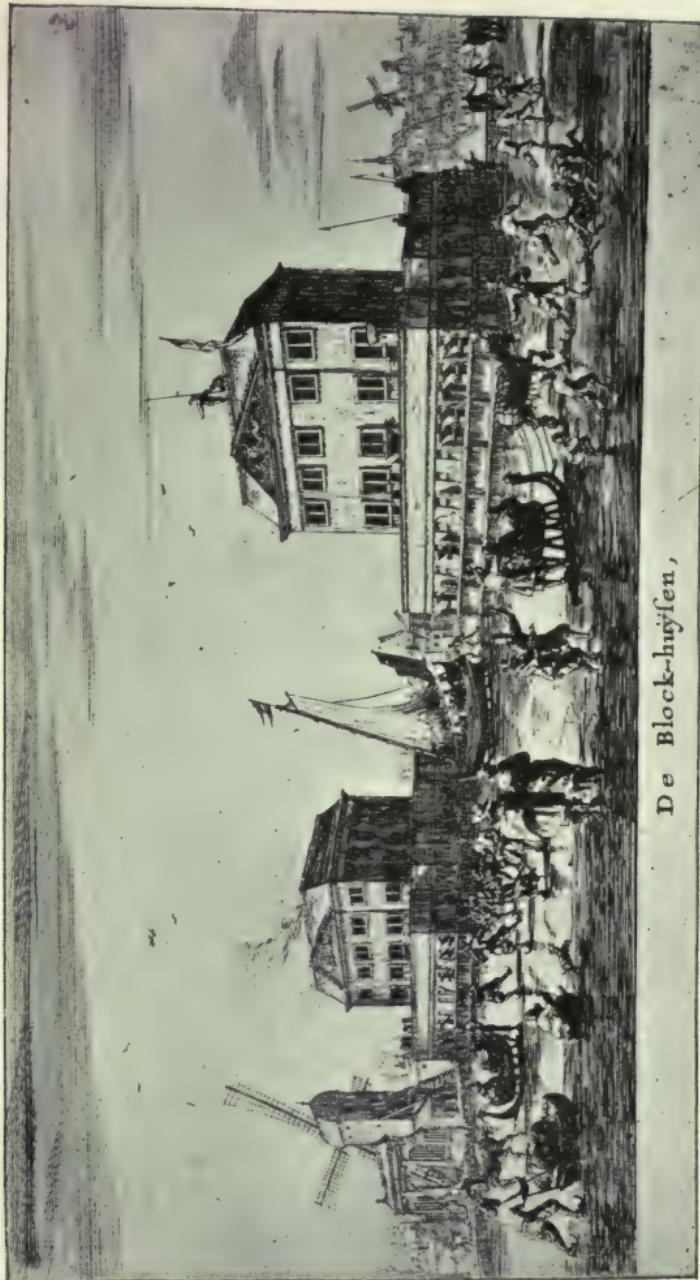
He was already seventy-one when he executed the thirteen, and perhaps fifteen, plates which are credited to him — an instance of belated activity, in a new medium, comparable to that of Corot, who made his dozen lithographs at about the same age. But Backhuysen's etchings, though produced so late in life, are neither languid nor feeble. On the contrary, the artist's great ships, with their whipping flags and their swelling sails, while perhaps a trifle theatrical as compared with Zeeman's, are even more tinged with the golden glory of romance. There is something less Dutch, one feels, than English and Elizabethan about them.

“No one, till Turner came,” says Mr. Binyon, “succeeded at all in painting the mass and weight of water as the tides move it in deep seas.” But although Turner may surpass them in the rendering of the water itself, both Zeeman and Backhuysen remain superior to him in the interpretation of that life which moves upon it in sturdy keels. In Turner's pictures, the ships generally seem mere accessories to the marine subject — like the human staffage of Claude's landscapes — and are quite evidently studied with no particular sympathy or closeness of observation. For the two Dutch artists, on the contrary, the ships are clearly the principal objects of interest, the sea itself being the accessory in their case, though both render quite adequately for their purposes, the short, sharp chop of the shallow Dutch waters — particularly Zeeman, who is notably superior, in this respect, to Backhuysen.

*De Blockhuyſen,*

REYNIER ZEEMAN. THE BLOCKHOUSES  
Size of the original etching,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Where both excel is in the suggestion of the buoyancy of their barks, of their sensitive and varied response to the elements of which they are at once the playthings and the conquerors, through man's ingenuity. Each picture, one feels, however slight, is the result of close and thorough preliminary observation. And if this is true in the case of individual vessels, it is even more striking where the problem is to show a number of ships in their varied, yet consistent, reaction to wind and wave. We never see here, as we do occasionally in Turner's pictures, one ship in violent motion during a gale, while the others ride at anchor almost as quietly as if there were a dead calm. A single spirit inspires the whole scene, and each individual vessel shares in it.

Thus both Zeeman's and Backhuysen's ships seem to us vital, sentient creatures, like the ships of few other artists whom we know, and give us an almost mythic impression of elemental life — as though these fabrics, made by men's hands, were really the offspring of the old sea-monsters, so often represented by Backhuysen on his steering-boards, and sometimes, fancifully, in the water itself. Studied as they are, in all the detail of their rigging — though the effect is never baldly realistic — they have, each of them, an individual expression, a physiognomy, of their own, and Backhuysen's, in particular, through some magic of arrangement in ropes and spars, often give an effect of sheer fantasy that is fascinating.

In short these two artists express a sentiment rarely encountered in pictorial art, although it is common enough in poetry — especially in English poetry. Kipling and Masefield both have it among the moderns. So has the latest of them all — the young English poet,



LUDOLF BACKHUYSEN. MARINE PIECE

Size of the original etching,  $6\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

so lately dead, James Elroy Flecker, who, in his poem entitled "The Old Ships," has written, with such enchantment, of vessels still older than those of our Dutch artists:—

"I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre."

The ships of Zeeman and Backhuysen are like eagles, rather than swans, as they sweep along under full sail. But often they, too, are so superb, so magical, that one half expects, with the same poet, to see *their* masts

"burst open with a rose,  
And the whole deck put on its leaves again."

## ANTONI WATERLOO

### I

**A**S in the case of so many Dutch etchers, — and of two with whom we have dealt particularly, Zeeman and Ruysdael, — almost nothing is known of the life of Antoni Waterloo, and this is the more remarkable in that there is perhaps no other landscape etcher of the period who tells us so much about himself through his work: the places that he liked, the villages that he visited, the views that he admired, the roads that he rambled along, the folks that he met there going about their business or idling in the shade. He tells us still other things too — things about his character as a man of affairs and as an artist. He was clearly an indefatigable, also a conscientious, worker, though not one of the most refined sensibility or the deepest devotion to nature, even in those aspects that most attracted him to her; and we see that he studied the fashions and sought to follow them himself in a more sedulous manner than a really great artist would have done. For, while he never, so far as we are aware, drifted southward on “the Road to Rome,” that attracted so many of his contemporaries, he attempted, at one time of his life, to capture a little of the spirit of

the Italianate school, and so lost something of the “first free careless rapture” of his first work — if we can use so strong a word as “rapture” to express the quiet and sedate, though genuine and communicable, pleasure that he derived from certain characteristic aspects of the Dutch landscape.

Waterloo was born in 1618, and his birthplace is given variously as Amsterdam, Utrecht, or Lille in Flanders. All that appears certain, beyond this, is that he lived a number of years somewhere between Maarsen and Breukelen, in the neighborhood of Utrecht; but even this certainty rests upon the fact that a large part of his prints are said to represent scenes in that vicinity, rather than upon any external or documentary evidence. In the same way it has been assumed that he made an excursion into the north of Germany. For, in the museum at Hamburg, there are several drawings signed by Waterloo, on which he has written the names of villages in the outskirts of that commercial capital. Dr. Sträter, who communicated this information to Dutuit, also pointed out that the drawings for one set of prints (B. 71–76), by the same artist, as well as for several other individual etchings, seem to have been made on the banks of the Meuse, between Liège and Dinant.

Waterloo was a painter as well as an etcher, but his paintings are rare to-day. Dutuit had seen but one of them — a landscape “agreeably composed and enriched with charming figures from the brush of Adriaen van de Velde” — figures being the particular *bête noir* and stumbling-block of Waterloo. The Dresden museum possesses two of his paintings; that at Munich three. Only one of the five is signed. Drawings by Waterloo

are more common, and are occasionally to be seen in the American market, as in the case of the drawing for the small plate, *The Rock with a Hole in it* (B. 3). But Waterloo seems to have owed his contemporary fame less to his paintings and drawings than to his etchings, of which he executed more than a hundred. Both Bartsch and Dutuit place the total number at 136, so it seems likely that we possess to-day everything, or practically everything, that he executed in that medium. This is, in itself, a remarkable circumstance, and points conclusively both to his great popularity in his own time, and to the large editions made from his various plates to meet the demand. In fact, we know from contemporary report, that he was highly successful, and that his works sold for good sums. In spite of this, the artist who may, in a sense, be called the landscape etcher *par excellence* of the Low Countries — the one whom the Dutch themselves regarded as their favorite in this field, and whose fame lasted longest after his death, rivalling van Ostade, an etcher of figures, in this respect — is said to have died in poverty, in the hospital of Saint Job in Utrecht, though another account has it that his demise occurred in Amsterdam on February 28, 1677.

Only one other fact may be reasonably inferred concerning the outward circumstances of Waterloo's life, and that is of interest since it serves to connect him in a way with the artist who was the greatest of all Dutch etchers, as Waterloo was one of the most popular — Rembrandt. It is possible that he may have met Rembrandt at the sale of Seghers' effects in 1645. Yet even this inference hinges upon a debated point as to the authorship of certain plates in one series (B. 89-94) which

were published as Waterloo's own, but which may have been the work of Seghers himself.

These plates, three in number — *View of a City in Holland* (B. 90), *The Village beside the Canal* (B. 91), and *The Village in the Valley* (B. 93) — resemble plates by Seghers very much more than they resemble other work by Waterloo. Moreover, they are signed in a different manner from the remaining plates in the same series — *A. W. exc.*, instead of *Antoni Waterloo f.* Now we know, of course, that Rembrandt bought one of Seghers' plates at this sale — a *Tobias and the Angel*, which he reworked, changing it into a *Flight into Egypt* — and there is no inherent reason why Waterloo should not have done likewise. There exists, in the museum at Amsterdam, a first state of *The Village beside the Canal*, without the foreground and foreground figures that Waterloo undoubtedly himself added in the second state. Dr. Sträter attributes this first state unreservedly to Seghers, and we can see no reason to question this attribution. So we think the chances are all in favor of the two artists having met at this historic sale, if they had not done so a hundred times already.

## II

One striking difference between Waterloo and nearly all the earlier Dutch landscape etchers, including Seghers, lies in the choice and treatment of subject. When we think of the Low Countries, the first picture that presents itself to the mind's eye, is pretty certain to be the wide expanse of a flat country flecked with windmills and farmhouses, and cut up into a more or less regular checkerboard pattern by an intricate network



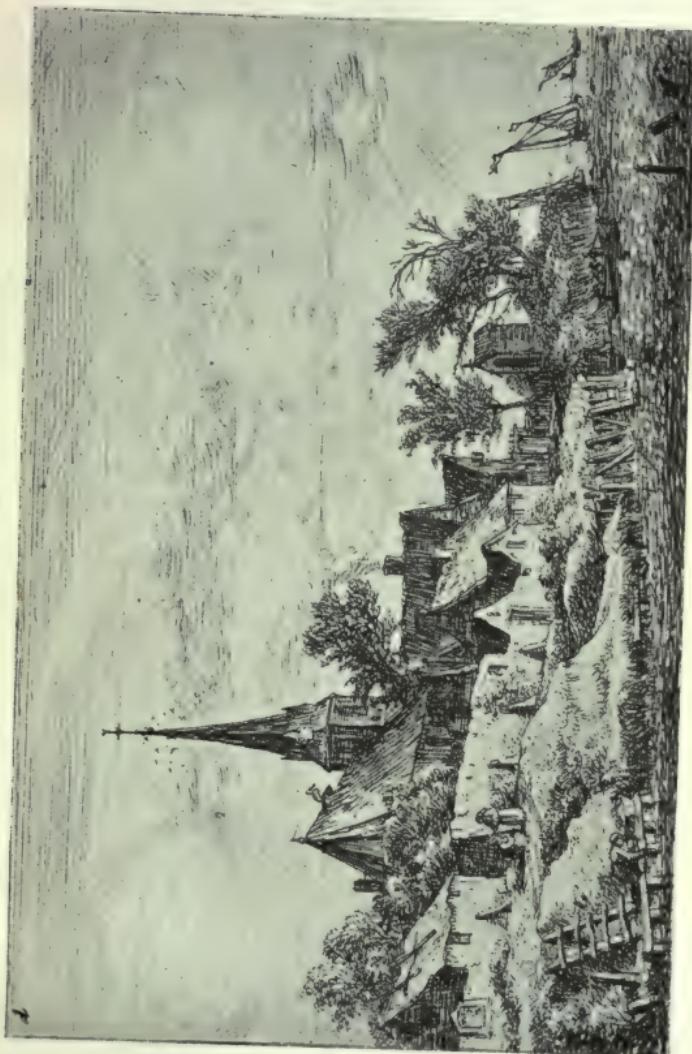
ANTONI WATERLOO. VIEW OF A CITY IN HOLLAND

Size of the original etching,  $4\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

of canals and hedges, and this is the way the majority of Dutch landscape artists thought of their own country, and saw it, till, in the field of etching, we come to Antoni Waterloo and Ruysdael. Of the former, who was the older by quite a number of years, and who may very well have exerted some influence upon the younger man in this respect, Bartsch says: — “He has seldom chosen to represent a scene of any great extent: a little corner of the forest; a part of a brook, its bank covered with verdure; a rock; an isolated village situated on the shore of a canal; a hermitage — such are the subjects he selects by preference,” and it is to this narrowing, this restricting of the scope of his representation, that Waterloo owes, in very large part, his undeniable charm as an etcher. For, if not a great artist, he is a true poet — at least when he follows the bent of his own native inspiration, and shows us the things, the scenes, in which he is really interested, in which he found a genuine appeal to his sedate sensibility. Then his best plates become veritable little poems and, so regarded, can afford a very real and rare pleasure.

Such is the case with a plate like the one entitled *The Cemetery on the Water's Edge* (B. 22), chosen almost at random from a portfolio of Waterloo's earlier etchings. A picturesque group of church buildings, surrounded by a wall, occupies the space at the left, the spire of the church itself barely showing above the steep roof of the building in the immediate foreground. In the wall opens a big door, which is reflected in the water, and on either side of this door stand two large, shapely trees. Along the towing path, in the centre of the picture, a horse, ridden by a man, draws a boat in the direc-



ANTONI WATERLOO. STEEPLE OF A VILLAGE BY THE SEA

Size of the original etching,  $3\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

tion of a little village in the distance, which seems swimming in still, limpid air and sunlight. The contrast between these distant sunlit spaces, and the cool tranquil shade of the church environs and enclosure, is pleasantly suggested, and the quiet, intimate charm of the little composition, which shows much skill in arrangement, is incontestable.

Still more attractive and interesting is the one entitled *Steeple of a Village by the Sea* (B. 24) in the same series of "Twelve Views." The village appears to be situated on a long headland, which reaches out into the sea across nearly the whole of the plate, and thus presents its side view to us, obliquely. Advantage is taken of the picturesque silhouette of the roofs, interspersed with trees, and dominated by the pointed spire, to make a very striking and tasteful pattern against the background of the delicately wrought sky, with filmy clouds. The immediate foreground is full of detail, such as the ladder leading down the steep bank to a little landing stage, where a woman, on her knees, is engaged in washing the clothes. There are also several boats, of which the two largest carry the line of the headland straight across the plate to its extreme limit on the right, thus completing the composition. This plate also shows great skill and feeling in the biting, and is worth studying in order to note the varying quality and texture of the lines in different parts of the plate. They are coarsest and closest in the church roofs and gables, whose dark mass is thus rendered the more monumental and effective.

*The Little Hamlet* (B. 29), still in the same series, is such a subject as Rembrandt might have chosen — did, in fact, often choose — in his fondness for farmhouses. And though, of course, Waterloo's treatment has none of



ANTONI WATERLOO. THE LITTLE HAMLET

Size of the original etching,  $3\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  inches

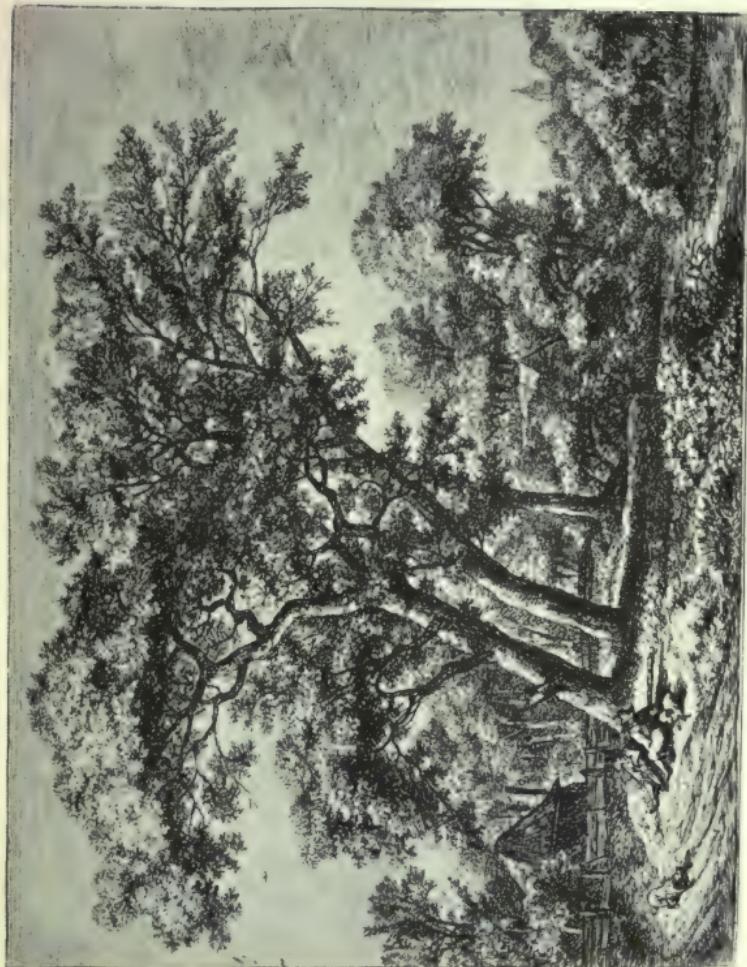
In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

that master's wonderful power of abstraction and elimination, he renders with taste and intelligence the more superficial aspect and sentiment of the rustic scene, and comes close to rivalling the work of such a modern master as Charles Jacque, in this vein of romantic pastoralism.

Waterloo's romanticism took another and equally modern turn. He loved old buildings in a way that suggests Sir Walter Scott, and, like Scott, he found them near at home. Castles and other memorials of the middle ages in architecture were still scattered over the Low Countries, and Waterloo gives us glimpses of them in such plates as *The Man in a Cloak, and His Dog* (B. 43) and *The Hedge Gate under the Trees* (B. 44). In the former also he has recognized the element of the picturesque added by the modern frame building erected against the ancient masonry wall, with its arches, at the left, and the different textures of the two are well indicated.

A romantic little chapel crowns the woody and rocky height in *The Two Hermits* (B. 47), showing clearly that religion also had its romantic side for Waterloo, in quite a modern manner, just as it had for Scott, again, in such novels as "The Monastery" and "The Abbot." Yet he was entirely catholic in his choice of subjects and, in the same series, he is as ready to show us a man beating his ass, as the two holy brethren ascending the hill to their secluded hermitage.

The truth is, of course, that for Waterloo, as for Claude and Both, the human figures are in reality mere staffage designed, at most, to heighten some particular sentiment of the landscape, and generally for no more serious purpose than to observe a fading convention. He



ANTONI WATERLOO. Two Hunters Resting

Size of the original etching, 6 X 8 inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

is a landscape etcher, pure and simple, and his figures are so badly drawn, so commonplace and uncharacteristic, that we can only wish he had left them out entirely, instead of drawing attention to them, as he so often does, in the titles. It seems grotesque that charming glimpses of woodland and roadside scenery, full of a fresh sylvan and vagabond sentiment, should be labelled as *The Man and the Woman by the Little Bridge* (B. 59), *The Traveller and His Dog* (B. 60), *The Three Young Boys and Their Dogs* (B. 61), *The Two Horsemen* (B. 63), *The Two Boys and the Barking Dog* (B. 64), and so on, when the figures whereby they are thus identified, are often actual blemishes, and merely serve to distract our attention from the real beauties of these plates.

In his later series Waterloo tends to work on an increasingly large scale, with a corresponding loss both in intimacy of charm and in delicacy of execution. Though certain of these large plates, like the *Farmhouse by a River* (B. 116) and *The Great Mill* (B. 119), are his most famous productions, they are by no means among the most pleasing. On the contrary, all that is coarsest and most commonplace in his facture comes most clearly to the surface in them, especially in his treatment of trees and of foliage.

There was a time, even long after his death, when Waterloo was regarded as the master of leaf and branch in etching. "Waterloo's subjects are the woods which he rendered like a veritable master," writes Bartsch; "all the truth of nature is found here, above all in the foliage, which he interpreted in an admirable manner." But although so recent a writer as Sir Frederick Wedmore echoes this appreciation in his latest volume on "Etching," and instances such an admirable plate as



ANTONI WATERLOO. THE GREAT MILL

Size of the original etching,  $11 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  inches

*The Two Bridges* (B. 47), as an example of his felicity, it is no longer possible to accord Waterloo the same unqualified praise on this score. Compared with the best modern etchers he seems harsh and mechanical, and there is little evidence in his work of any serious or sympathetic study of natural forms for their own sake, as there is, for example, in Ruysdael. Yet Waterloo followed Ruysdael in the attempt to achieve a fuller, more painter-like representation of foliage, and it is easy to see how effective, how naturalistic, his treatment must have appeared after the naïve efforts of such early etchers as the van de Veldes.

Like a painter, Waterloo, without abandoning pure line, though somewhat debasing it, attempts a tonal interpretation of his material. Through it he seeks a fuller modelling, a subtler effect of color, than had hitherto been achieved in landscape etching. He particularly loves to show the flickering reflection of sunlight on the treetops; and he pursues this phase of his subject to the point where he weakens his plates through that excessive multiplication and dispersal of the lights, to which all critics have directed attention. Thus, where the van de Veldes are naïve, Waterloo seems a little sophisticated and insincere; and, as between the two, we much prefer the simpler, more purely stylistic treatment of such an artist as Esaias van de Velde, to Waterloo's rather heavy, over-elaborate method of imitation. In the former there are, at least, balance, harmony, and a strong feeling for linear design, all of which are more or less sacrificed in the latter, for the sake of immediate effectiveness.

As a matter of fact, there is no Dutch etcher of the seventeenth century who succeeds very well with foli-



ANTONI WATERLOO. LARGE LINDEN IN FRONT OF THE INN

Size of the original etching,  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{5}{8}$  inches

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

age. Between Waterloo, who is satisfied with too facile a formula, and Ruysdael, who never succeeds in achieving a formula at all, there is no artist who may be regarded as having actually solved the problem, unless perhaps it be Verboom, who etched but few plates, though these are masterpieces. On the whole, it was left for the artists of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century to solve their problem, and men like John Crome, in England, and Théodore Rousseau, in France, may be considered, in this respect, the true successors of the seventeenth-century Dutch landscape etchers — the continuers of their work.

### III

On the technical side there is much that is interesting about Waterloo, for he was one of the first modern etchers to experiment with his medium, to multiply his means of expressing himself upon the copper, and to avail himself of the full resources of his medium.

According to Bartsch, the method he employed was to let the acid delicately bite his plates, without ever submitting them a second time to the operation. To safeguard his backgrounds against the action of the acid, he took care to stop them out, and obtained, in this way, the gradation of his planes. Bartsch cites particularly, in support of this theory, *The Two Men Before the Gate* (B. 56), where the great mass of the woods separates itself perfectly from the tree in the left foreground, which is deeply bitten by the acid. But ordinarily he gave his plates a general biting, then added, with the burin alone, the harmonization of the tones, as well as the strong shadows, wherever he judged it necessary.

As an example of this method, Bartsch takes *The Entrance of the Wood Surrounded by a Hedge* (B. 55), where three different planes have been bitten feebly, and to the same degree. The gradations have been effected afterwards by a more or less free use of the burin, an instrument of which Waterloo, in general, availed himself abundantly.

From these methods one serious drawback has arisen. Waterloo's plates having been delicately etched with acid, and then charged with a great deal of burin work, it happened that, as they became worn from printing, the etched lines grew visibly weaker, while those made by the graver, being deeper, did not diminish in the same proportion, so that the tones became confused and the harmony was destroyed. It is for this reason that it has sometimes been believed that these bad proofs have been retouched — an error, according to Bartsch, who claims that the effect is produced entirely by the wearing of the plate.

Some few plates were, indeed, retouched afterwards, by other hands, but this new work "occurs mostly in the wooded foregrounds, rarely on the tree-trunks, never in the foliage."

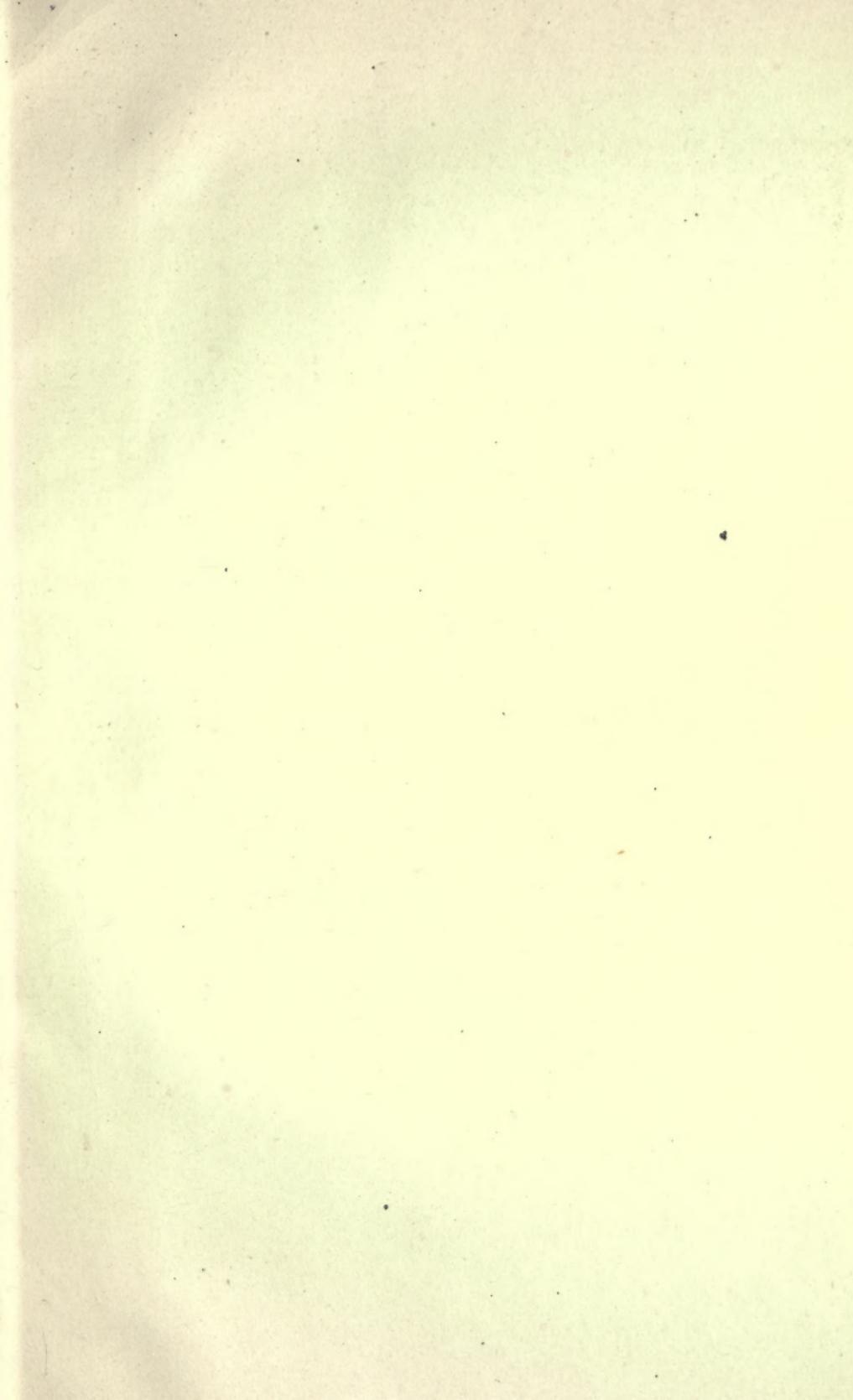
A greater number have been rebitten. They can be distinguished by the fact that, in all the places where delicacy is required, the lines are coarse and crude, that there is no gradation in the tones, that the distances are as vigorous as the foregrounds. The whole plate offers nothing but an assemblage of black and monotonous masses, opposed to pure whites devoid of those delicate half tones, and those touches of brilliant black, which produce the striking effect so justly admired in the good proofs.

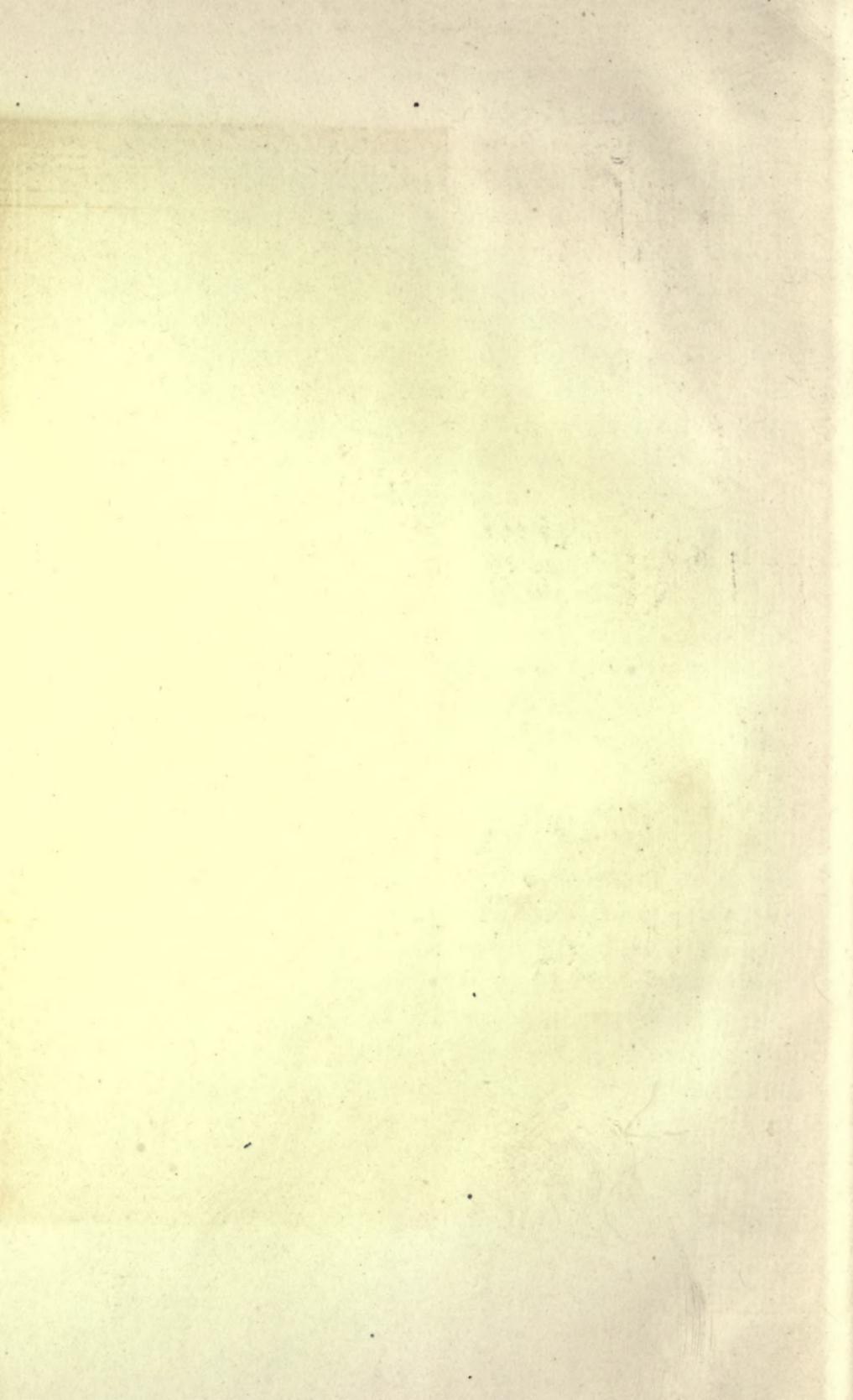
Such proofs are rare in American collections, though imperfect ones are common enough, so it is not an easy matter to judge accurately of the artistic merits of Waterloo without a little search for fine impressions.

In conclusion it may be repeated that Waterloo, if not a great artist, is a most agreeable minor master, and that he excels in the rendering, if not of trees and foliage as such, at least of a certain sense of leafy seclusion and solitude. In his later, and larger plates — particularly in those which deal with Biblical and mythological subjects, and where he invents an entirely imaginary landscape to suit his mood — boskage becomes as it were, an obsession, and the artist appears bent, with the English poet, Andrew Marvell, upon

“resolving all that’s made  
To a green thought in a green shade.”

This shade itself, and not the trees that produce it, one feels, is the real theme of much of Waterloo’s art; for, as has been said, he was, above all, a sentimentalist, only secondarily a nature-lover and a student of nature. This makes the limitation of its appeal to us at the present day, just as it does that of much of the art and literature of the 1830 period. But it is easy to see how such pictures, with their calm, idyllic atmosphere, should have appealed to the substantial Dutch burghers of the seventeenth century, for whom they fulfilled the primary function of Dutch art, in general, by furnishing them, in the words of Pater, “with an ideal world, beyond which the real world is discernible indeed, but etherealized by the medium through which it comes to one.”





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